

VALT

Education in Albania

The literacy rate in Albania for the total population, age 9 or older, is about 93%. Elementary education is compulsory (grades 1-8), but most students continue at least until a secondary education. Students must successfully pass graduation exams at the end of the 8th grade and at the end of the 12th grade in order to continue their education.

Most schools are public and financed through the government, but recently several private schools of various levels have been opened. There are about 5000 schools throughout the country. The academic year is divided into two semesters. The school week begins on Monday and ends on Friday. The school year begins in September and finishes around June. There is a winter break of about two to three weeks.

- Preschool education : 1-4 years
- Primary education (*9-vjeçare*): 9 years (It was 8 years before 2005)
- Secondary education:
 - Regular : 3 years
 - Vocational or Technical : 2-5 years
- Tertiary education:
 - Undergraduate : 4-5 years
 - Graduate: 1-3 years
- Quaternary education 3 years

Pre-Communist Era

As late as 1946, about 85% of the people were illiterate, principally because schools using the Albanian language had been practically non-existent in the country before it became independent in 1912. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the Ottoman rulers had prohibited the use of the Albanian language in schools. Turkish was spoken in the few schools that served the Muslim population. These institutions were located mainly in cities and large towns. The schools for Orthodox Christian children were under the supervision of the Constantinople Ecumenical Patriarchate. The teachers at these schools usually were recruited from the Orthodox clergy, and the language of instruction was Greek. The first school known to use Albanian in modern times was a Franciscan seminary that opened in 1861 in Shkodër, though there are mentions of Albanian schools by Franciscans since 1638 [1] in Pdhanë.

From about 1880 to 1910, several Albanian patriots' intent on creating a sense of national consciousness founded elementary schools in a few cities and towns, mostly in the south, but these institutions were closed by the Ottoman authorities. The advent of the Young Turks movement in 1908 motivated the Albanian patriots to intensify their efforts, and in the same year a group of

intellectuals met in Monastir to choose an Albanian alphabet. Books written in Albanian before 1908 had used a mixture of alphabets, consisting mostly of combinations of Latin, Greek, and Turkish-Arabic letters.

The participants in the Monastir meeting developed a unified alphabet based on Latin letters. A number of textbooks soon were written in the new alphabet, and Albanian elementary schools opened in various parts of the country. In 1909, to meet the demand for teachers able to teach in the native tongue, a normal school was established in Elbasan. But in 1910, the Young Turks, fearing the emergence of Albanian nationalism, closed all schools that used Albanian as the language of instruction.

Even after Albania became independent, schools were scarce. The unsettled political conditions caused by the Balkan Wars and by World War I hindered the development of a unified education system. The foreign occupying powers, however, opened some schools in their respective areas of control, each power offering instruction in its own language. A few of these schools, especially the Italian and French ones, continued to function after World War I and played a significant role in introducing Western educational methods and principles. Particularly important was the National Lycée of Korçë, in which the language of instruction was French.

Soon after the establishment of a national government in 1920, which included a ministry of education, the foundation was laid for a national education system. Elementary schools were opened in the cities and some of the larger towns, and the Italian and French schools that had opened during World War I were strengthened. In the meantime, two important American schools were founded--the American Vocational School in Tirana, established by the American Junior Red Cross in 1921, and the American Agricultural School in Kavajë, sponsored by the Near East Foundation. Several future communist party and government luminaries were educated in the foreign schools: Enver Hoxha graduated from the National Lycée in 1930, and Mehmet Shehu, who would become prime minister, completed studies at the American Vocational School in 1932.

In the 1920s, the period when the foundations of the modern Albanian state were laid, considerable progress was made toward development of a genuinely Albanian education system. In 1933 the Royal Constitution was amended to make the education of citizens an exclusive right of the state. All foreign-language schools, except the American Agricultural School, were either closed or nationalized. This move was intended to stop the rapid spread of schools sponsored directly by the Italian government, especially among Roman Catholics in the north.

The nationalization of schools was followed in 1934 by a farreaching reorganization of the entire education system. The new system called for compulsory elementary education from the ages of four to fourteen. It also provided for the expansion of secondary schools of various kinds; the establishment of new technical, vocational, and commercial secondary schools; and the acceleration and expansion of teacher training. The obligatory provisions of the 1934 reorganization law were never enforced in rural areas because the peasants needed their children to work in the fields, and because of a lack of schoolhouses, teachers, and means of transportation.

The only minority schools operating in Albania before World War II were those for the Greek minority living in the district of Gjirokastër. These schools too were closed by the constitutional amendment of 1933, but Greece referred the case to the International Permanent Court of Justice, which forced Albania to reopen them.

Pre-World War II Albania had no university-level education and all advanced studies were pursued abroad. Every year the state granted a limited number of scholarships to deserving high school

graduates, who otherwise could not afford to continue their education. But the largest number of university students came from well-to-do families and thus were privately financed. The great majority of the students attended Italian universities because of their proximity and because of the special relationship between the Rome and Tirana governments. The Italian government itself, following a policy of political, economic, military, and cultural penetration of the country, granted a number of scholarships to Albanian students recommended by its legation in Tirana.

Soon after the Italians occupied Albania in April 1939, the education system came under complete Italian control. Use of the Italian language was made compulsory in all secondary schools, and the fascist ideology and orientation were incorporated into the curricula. After 1941, however, when guerrilla groups began to operate against the Italian forces, the whole education system became paralyzed. Secondary schools became centers of resistance and guerrilla recruitment, and many teachers and students went to the mountains to join resistance groups. By September 1943, when Italy capitulated to the Allies and German troops invaded and occupied Albania, education had come to a complete standstill.

Education Under Communist Rule

Upon taking power in late 1944, the communist regime gave high priority to reopening the schools and organizing the whole education system to reflect communist ideology. The regime's objectives for the new school system were to wipe out illiteracy in the country as soon as possible, to struggle against "bourgeois survivals" in the country's culture, to transmit to Albanian youth the ideas and principles of communism as interpreted by the party, and finally to educate the children of all social classes on the basis of these principles. The 1946 communist constitution made it clear that the regime intended to bring all children under the control of the state. All schools were soon placed under state management.

The 1946 Education Reform Law provided specifically that Marxist-Leninist principles would permeate all school texts. This law also made the struggle against illiteracy a primary objective of the new school system. In September 1949, the government promulgated a law requiring all citizens between the ages of twelve and forty who could not read to attend classes in reading and writing. Courses for illiterate peasants were established by the education sections of the people's councils. The political organs of the armed forces provided parallel courses for illiterate military personnel.

In addition to providing for free seven-year obligatory elementary schooling and four-year secondary education, the 1946 law called for the establishment of a network of vocational, trade, and teacher-training schools to prepare personnel, technicians, and skilled workers for various social, cultural, and economic activities. Another education law adopted in 1948 provided for the further expansion of vocational and professional courses to train skilled and semiskilled workers and to increase the theoretical and professional knowledge of the technicians.

In the 1950s, the school system was given a thorough Soviet orientation in terms both of communist ideological propaganda and central government control. Secondary technical schools were established along the same lines. In 1951 three institutes of higher learning were founded: the Higher Pedagogic Institute, the Higher Polytechnical Institute, and the Higher Agricultural Institute, all patterned on Soviet models. Most textbooks, especially those dealing with scientific and technical matters, were Soviet translations. Courses for teacher preparation were established in which the Russian language, Soviet methods of pedagogy and psychology, and Marxist-Leninist dialectics were taught by Soviet instructors. A team of Soviet educators laid the structural, curricular, and ideological foundations of the Enver Hoxha University at Tirana (now called University of Tirana), which was established in 1957.

By 1960 the system of elementary and secondary education had evolved into an eleven-year program encompassing schools of general education and vocational and professional institutes. The schools of general education consisted of primary grades one to four, intermediate grades five to seven, and secondary grades eight to eleven. In October 1960, however, as Soviet-Albanian tensions were reaching the breaking point, the Albanian Party of Labor issued a resolution calling for the reorganization of the whole school system. The resolution's real aim was to purge the schools of Soviet influence and rewrite the textbooks. An additional year was added to the eleven-year general education program, and the whole school system was integrated more closely with industry in order to prepare Albanian youth to replace the Soviet specialists, should the latter be withdrawn, as they eventually were in 1961.

A subsequent reform divided the education system into four general categories: preschool, general eight-year program, secondary, and higher education. The compulsory eight-year program was designed to provide pupils with the elements of ideological, political, moral, aesthetic, physical, and military education. The new system lowered the entrance age for pupils from seven to six, and no longer separated primary and intermediate schools.

Secondary education began with grade nine (usually at age fourteen), and ended with grade twelve. Secondary schools offered four-year general education programs or four-year vocational and professional programs, including industrial, agricultural, pedagogic, trade, arts, and health tracks, among others. Some programs lasted only two years.

The term of study in the institutes of higher education lasted three to five years, and tuition was also free at this level. Provision was made to expand higher education by increasing the number of full-time students, setting up new branches in places where there were no post-secondary institutes, and organizing specialized courses in which those who had completed higher education would be trained to become highly qualified technical and scientific cadres. All full-time graduate students had to serve a probationary period of nine months in industrial production and three months in military training, in addition to the prescribed military training in school.

Adult education was provided in the same sequence as fulltime schooling for younger students, with two exceptions. First, the eight-year general education segment was noncompulsory, and was compressed into a six-year program that allowed for completion of the first four grades in two years. Second, those who wanted to proceed to higher institutes after completing secondary school had to devote one year to preparatory study instead of engaging in production work, as full-time students did.

Official statistics indicated that the regime made considerable progress in education. Illiteracy had been virtually eliminated by the late 1980s. From a total enrollment of fewer than 60,000 students at all levels in 1939, the number of people in school had grown to more than 750,000 by 1987; also, there were more than 40,000 teachers in Albania. About 47% of all students were female. The proportion of eighth-grade graduates who continued with some type of secondary education increased from 39% in 1980 to 73% in 1990, with no village reporting a figure lower than 56%.

Education in the New Albania

A reorganization plan was announced in 1990 that would extend the compulsory education program from eight to ten years. The following year, however, a major economic and political crisis in Albania, and the ensuing breakdown of public order, plunged the school system into chaos (Albania: 1990). Widespread vandalism and extreme shortages of textbooks and supplies had a devastating effect on school operations, prompting Italy and other countries to provide material

assistance. The minister of education reported in September 1991 that nearly one-third of the 2,500 schools below the university level had been ransacked and fifteen school buildings razed. Many teachers relocated from rural to urban areas, leaving village schools understaffed and swelling the ranks of the unemployed in the cities and towns; about 2,000 teachers fled the country. The highly structured and controlled educational environment that the communist regime had painstakingly cultivated in the course of more than forty-six years was abruptly shattered and had to be rebuilt.

In the late 1990s, many schools were rebuilt or reconstructed to improve learning conditions. Most of the improvements have happened in the larger cities, such as the capital Tirana which suffers from vast overcrowding of classrooms. The old communist propaganda has been taken out of all school curricula and more emphasis has been put on mathematics, sciences and humanities. Some of the wealthier schools have begun introducing computers, but many schools still lack basic supplies for laboratory classes.

Music of Albania

Albania is a Southeast European nation that was ruled by Enver Hoxha's communist government for much of the later part of the 20th century; it is now a democratic country. Even before Hoxha's reign began, Albania was long controlled by the Ottoman Empire and other conquering powers, leading to a diversity of influences that is common in the much-fragmented Balkan region and resulting in a diverse and unique musical sound. Albanians (and the ethnic-Albanian Kosovars of Kosovo) are commonly divided into three groupings: the northern Ghegs and southern Labs and Tosks. Turkish influence is strongest around the capital city, Tirana, while Shkodër has been long considered the center for musical development in Albania.

Folk music was encouraged to some degree under the socialist government, which promoted a quinquennial music festival at Gjirokastër provided that the musicians expressed frequent support for the party leaders. After the fall of socialism, Albanian Radio-Television launched a 1995 festival in Berat that has helped to continue musical traditions.

7 Characteristics

Albania's political, military and cultural domination by outside elements have contributed to the country's modern music scene. Albanian music is a fusion of the musics of Southeastern Europe, especially that of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled Albania for more than 500 years. However, the Albanian people kept themselves culturally apart from the Ottomans, with many living in rural and remote mountains. The Ottoman were Turkish people.

Folk music

Albanian folk music falls into three stylistic groups, with other important music areas around Shkodër and Tirana; the major groupings are the Ghegs of the north and southern Labs and Tosks. The northern and southern traditions are contrasted by the "rugged and heroic" tone of the north and the "relaxed, gentle and exceptionally beautiful" form of the south. These disparate styles are unified by "the intensity that both performers and listeners give to their music as a medium for patriotic expression and as a vehicle carrying the narrative of oral history",^[1] as well as certain characteristics like the use of obscure rhythms such as 3/8, 5/8 and 10/8.^[2] The first compilation of Albanian folk music was made by Pjetër Dungu in 1940.

Albanian folk songs can be divided into major groups, the heroic epics of the north, and the sweetly melodic lullabies, love songs, wedding music, work songs and other kinds of song. The music of various festivals and holidays is also an important part of Albanian folk song, especially those that celebrate St. Lazarus Day (*the llazore*), which inaugurates the springtime. Lullabies and laments are very important kinds of Albanian folk song, and are generally performed by solo women.^[3]

Northern Albania

The Ghegs from north of the Shkumbini River are known for a distinctive variety of sung epic poetry. Many of these are about Skanderbeg, a legendary 15th century warrior who led the struggle against the Turks, and the "constant Albanian themes of honour, hospitality, treachery and revenge". These traditions are a form of oral history for the Ghegs, and also "preserve and inculcate moral codes and social values", necessary in a society that, until the early 20th century, relied on blood feuds as its "primary means of law enforcement" Styles of epics include *këngë trimash* (*songs of bravery*), *këngë kreshnikësh*, ballads and *maje krahi* (*cries*) ^[citation needed]. Major epics include *Mujo and Halil* and *Halil and Hajrije*.

The most traditional variety of epic poetry is called *Rapsodi Kreshnike* (*Poems of Heroes*). These epic poems are sung, accompanied by a *lahuta*, a one-stringed fiddle. It is rarely performed in modern Albania, but is found in the northern highlands.

Somewhat further south, around Dibër and Kërçovë in Macedonia, the lahuta is not used, replaced by the çifteli, a two-stringed instrument in which one string is used for the drone and one for the melody. Though men are the traditional performers, except for the Vajze të betuar, women have increasingly been taking part in epic balladry.^[1]

Along with the def, çifteli and sharki are used in a style of dance and pastoral songs. Homemade wind instruments are traditionally used by shepherds in northern Albania; these include the zumarë, an unusual kind of clarinet. This shepherds' music is "melancholic and contemplative" in tone.^[1] The songs called *maje-krahi* are another important part of North Albanian folk song; these were originally used by mountaineers to communicate over wide distances, but are now seen as songs. *Maje-krahi* songs require the full range of the voice and are full of "melismatic nuances and falsetto cries".^[3]

Southern Albania

Southern Albanian music is soft and gentle, and polyphonic in nature. Vlorë in the southwest has perhaps the most unusual vocal traditions in the area, with four distinct parts (*taker*, *thrower*, *turner* and *drone*) that combine to create a complex and emotionally cathartic melody. Author Kim Burton has described the melodies as "decorated with falsetto and vibrato, sometimes interrupted by wild and mournful cries". This polyphonic vocal music is full of power that "stems from the tension between the immense emotional weight it carries, rooted in centuries of pride, poverty and oppression, and the strictly formal, almost ritualistic nature of its structure".^[1]

South Albania is also known for funeral laments with chorus and one to two soloists with overlapping, mournful voices. There is a prominent folk love song tradition in the south, in which performers use free rhythm and consonant harmonies, elaborated with ornamentation and melisma.

The Tosk people are known for ensembles consisting of violins, clarinets, llautë (a kind of lute) and def. Eli Fara, a popular émigré performer, is from Korçë, but the city of Përmet is the center for southern musical innovation, producing artists like Remzi Lela and Laver Bariu. Lela is of special

note, having founded a musical dynasty that continues with his descendants playing a part in most of the major music institutions in Tirana.

Southern instrumental music includes the sedate kaba, an ensemble-driven form driven by a clarinet or violin alongside accordions and llautës. The kaba is an improvised and melancholic style with melodies that Kim Burton describes as "both fresh and ancient", "ornamented with swoops, glides and growls of an almost vocal quality", exemplifying the "combination of passion with restraint that is the hallmark of Albanian culture."

The ethnic Greek inhabitants of Dropulli, have a music very similar to the music of Epirus in Greece. These Greek-Albanians have a rougher and more aggressive sound than other forms of Albanian music, and lack the polyphonic complexity, but otherwise the same scales and rhythmic patterns as the rest of the country.

Popular music

The city of Korca has long been the cultural capital of Albania, and its music is considered the most sophisticated in the country. Bosnian sevdalinka is an important influence on music from the area, which is complex, with shifts through major and minor scales with a Turkish sound and a romantic and sophisticated tone.^[1] Traditional musicians from Shkodër include Bujar Qamili, Luçija Miloti, Xhevdet Hafizi and Bik Ndoja. Albanians also play the Armenian Duduk.

Albania's capital, Tirana, is the home of popular music dominated by Romani influences and has been popularized at home and in emigrant communities internationally by Merita Halili, Parashqevi Simaku and Myslim Leli.^[1] In recent times, influences from Western Europe and the United States have led to the creation of bands that play rock, pop and hip hop among many other genres.

The best voices of contemporary Albanian music are those of Vace Zela and Nexhmije Pagarusha. The first one had a successful career in Tirana and the second one in Prishtina. It's only fair to admit that their success was never recognised internationally, but that does not take away anything from their greatness. The Albanian music has never had the chance to get a worldwide publicity such as the one that would come from a successful movie or other event of international interest. It is really like an unexplored treasure of antiquity, that is waiting to be discovered.

1930s art song

The urban art songs of 1930s Albania can be traced back to the 19th century folk music of Albanian cities. These songs are a major part of Albania's music heritage, but have been little-studied by ethnomusicologists, who prefer to focus on the rural folk music that they see as being more authentically Albanian. Urban art songs are strongly influenced by the music of the Ottoman authorities who controlled Albania for a very long time, introducing elements of Turkish music, especially the Ottoman modal scales, to local folk styles. The northern part of Albania took more readily to Turkish music because both traditions use monophony, while the south of Albania has long been based on polyphony and a Greek modal system.

Out of this melting pot of local and imported styles came a kind of lyrical art song based in the cities of Shkodra, Elbasan, Berat and Korça. Though similar traditions existed in other places, they were little recorded and remain largely unknown. By the end of the 19th century, Albanian nationalism was inspiring many to attempt to remove the elements of Turkish music from Albanian culture, a desire that was intensified following independence in 1912; bands that formed during this era played a variety of European styles, including marches and waltzes. Urban song in the early

20th century could be divided into two styles: the historic or nationalistic style, and the lyrical style. The lyrical style included a wide array of lullabies and other forms, as well as love songs.

By the end of the 1930s, urban art song had been incorporated into classical music, while the singer Marie Kraja made a popular career out of art songs; she was one of Albania's first popular singers. The first recordings, however, of urban art song came as early as 1937, with the orchestral sounds of Tefta Tashko-Koço.

1950s and beyond

Modern Albanian popular music uses instruments like the çifteli and sharki, which have been used in large bands since the Second World War to great popular acclaim; the same songs, accompanied by clarinet and accordion, are performed at small weddings and celebrations.^[1]

Classical music

One pivotal composer in modern Albanian classical music was Mart Gjoka, who composed several vocal and instrumental music which uses elements of urban art song and the folk melodies of the northern highlands; Gjoka's work in the early 1920s marks the beginning of professional Albanian classical music. Later, the Albanian-American émigrés Fan S. Noli and Murat Shendu achieved some renown, with Noli using urban folk songs in his *Byzantine Overture* and is also known for a symphonic poem called *Scanderberg*.^[3] Shehu spent much of his life in prison for his religious beliefs, but managed to compose melodramas like *The Siege of Shkodër*, *The Red Scarf* and *Rozafa*, which helped launch the field of Albanian opera^[citation needed]. Other famous art composers include Thoma Nassi, Kristo Kono and Frano Ndoja. Preng Jakova became well-known for operas like *Scanderbeg* and *Mrika*, which were influenced by traditional Italian opera, the belcanto style and Albanian folk song. Undoubtedly the most famous Albanian composer, however, was Çesk Zadeja, known as the Father of Albanian classical music;^[5] he composed in many styles, from symphonies to ballets, beginning in 1956, and also helped found the Music Conservatory of Tirana, the Theatre of Opera and Ballet, and the Assembly of Songs and Dances.

Later in the 20th century, Albanian composers came to focus on ballets, opera and other styles; these included Tonin Harapi, Nikolla Zoraqi, Thoma Gaqi, Feim Ibrahimi and Shpetim Kushta. Since the fall of the Communist regime, new composers like Aleksander Peci, Sokol Shupo, Endri Sina and Vasil Tole have arisen, as have new music institutions like the Society of Music Professionals and the Society of New Albanian Music.^[5]

Albanian Musical Instrument

- Tepsia
- Zumarja
- Çiftelia
- Qypi
- Surlja
- Llauta
- Dajreja
- Gajda
- Lahuta
- Lodra
- Fyelli
- Bishnica

- Bilbili
- Sargija

Notes and references

1. ^ a b c d e f g h i j k l m n Burton, Kim. "The Eagle Has Landed". 2000. In Broughton, Simon and Ellingham, Mark with McConnachie, James and Duane, Orla (Ed.), World Music, Vol. 1: Africa, Europe and the Middle East, pp 1-6. Rough Guides Ltd, Penguin Books. ISBN 1-85828-636-0. Burton notes that even lullabies contained the wish that the infant would grow up to be a strong worker for Enver and the Party.
2. ^ Arbatsky, Yuri, cited in Koco with the footnote Translated and published by Filip Fishta in Shkolla Kombëtare (The National School; No.1, May 1939), 19, and quoted from his Preface to Pjetër Dungu's Lyra Shqiptare (see note 2).
3. ^ a b c d e f g h Albanian Music. Eno Koco at the University of Leeds. Retrieved on August 28, 2005.
4. ^ Burton, pg. 2 Both epic traditions serve as a medium for oral history in what was until quite recently, a pre-literate society... and also preserve and inculcate moral codes and social values. In a culture that retained the blood-feud as its primary means of law enforcement until well into this century such codes were literally matters of life and death. Song was one of the most efficient ways of making sure that each member of the tribe was aware of what obligations he or she was bound by.
5. ^ a b c The Tradition of Classical Music In Albania. Frosina Information Network. Retrieved on August 28, 2005.

Albanian literature



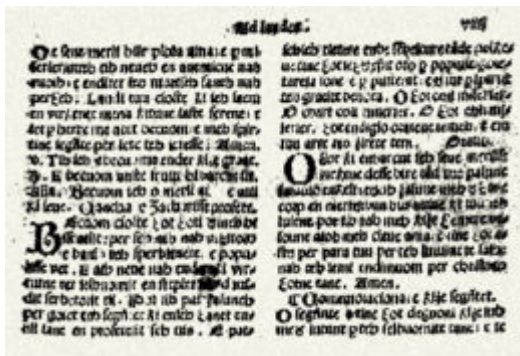
Frontispiece of *Historia de vita et gestis Scanderbegi, Epirotarum principis* by Marin Barleti.

Albania, part of the ancient Illyrian territories, a cross-road of civilizations and geopolitical interests during the barbarian onslaughts and later on a province of the Eastern and Western Empires, Rome and Byzantium, after, over centuries, having constituted and dissolved independent despotisms and

principates, and after having eventually constituted the state of Skanderbeg, was forced to jump backwards to a historically remote stage of economic and social development due to the Ottoman occupation. The normal process of Albanian culture, which kept pace with European humanism, was interrupted. The first consequence of invasion was the outflow of intellectual elite to the West. Among such elite, many personalities became renowned in the humanist world, as, for e.g., historian Marin Barleti (1460-1513) who in 1510 published in Rome a history of Skanderbeg, which was translated almost into all European languages, or Marino Becichemi (1408-1526), Gjon Gazulli (1400-1455), Leonicus Thomeus (1456-1531), Michele Maruli (15th century), Michele Artioti (1480-1556) and many others who were distinguished in various fields of science, art and philosophy.

Old Literature

The cultural resistance was first of all expressed through the elaboration of the Albanian language in the area of church texts and publications, mainly of the Catholic confessional region in the North, but also of the Orthodox in the South. The Protestant reforms invigorated hopes for the development of the local language and literary tradition when cleric Gjon Buzuku brought into the Albanian language the Catholic liturgy, trying to do for the Albanian language what Luther did for German.



Excerpt from Meshari by Gjon Buzuku.

Meshari (The Missal) by Gjon Buzuku, published by him in 1555, is considered to date as the first literary work of written Albanian. The refined level of the language and the stabilised orthography must be a result of an earlier tradition of writing Albanian, a tradition that is not known. But there are some fragmented evidence, dating earlier than Buzuku, which indicate that Albanian was written at least since 14th century AD. The first known evidence dates from 1332 AD and deals with the French Dominican Guillelmus Adae, Archbishop of Antivari, who in a report in Latin writes that Albanians use Latin letters in their books although their language is quite different from Latin. Of special importance in supporting this are: a baptizing formula (*Unte paghesont premenit Arit et Birit et spertit senit*) of 1462, written in Albanian within a text in Latin by the bishop of Durrës, Pal Engjëlli; a glossary with Albanian words of 1497 by Arnold von Harff, a German who had travelled through Albania, and a 15th century fragment from the Bible from the Gospel of Matthew, also in Albanian, but in Greek letters.

Albanian writings of these centuries must not have been religious texts only, but historical chronicles too. They are mentioned by the humanist Marin Barleti, who, in his book *Rrethimi i Shkodrës* (The Siege of Shkodër) (1504), confirms that he leafed through such chronicles written in the language of the people (*in vernacula lingua*). Despite the obstacles generated by the Counter-Reformation which was opposed to the development of national languages in Christian liturgy¹, this

process went on uninterrupted. During the 16th to 17th centuries, the catechism *E mbësuarë krishterë* (Christian Teachings) (1592) by Lekë Matrënga, *Doktrina e krishterë* (The Christian Doctrine) (1618) and *Rituale romanum* (1621) by Pjetër Budi, the first writer of original Albanian prose and poetry, an apology for George Castriot (1636) by Frang Bardhi, who also published a dictionary and folklore creations, the theological-philosophical treaty *Cuneus Prophetarum* (The Band of Prophets) (1685) by Pjetër Bogdani, the most universal personality of Albanian Middle Ages, were published in Albanian.

Bogdani's work is a theological-philosophical treatise that considers with originality, by merging data from various sources, principal issues of theology, a full biblical history and the complicated problems of scholasticism, cosmogony, astronomy, pedagogy, etc. Bogdani brought into Albanian culture the humanist spirit and praised the role of knowledge and culture in the life of man; with his written work in a language of polished style, he marked a turning point in the history of Albanian literature.

During 18th century, the literature of Orthodox and Muslim confessional cultural circles witnessed a greater development. An anonymous writer from Elbasan translated into Albanian a number of sections from the Bible; T. H. Filipi, also from Elbasan, brings the *Dhiata e Vjetër dhe e Re* (The Old and the New Testament). These efforts multiplied in the following century with the publication in 1827 of the integral text of the *Dhiata e Re* (The New Testament) by G. Gjirokastriti and with the big corpus of (Christian) religious translations by Konstandin Kristoforidhi (1830-1895), in both main dialects of Albanian, publications which helped in the process of integrating the two dialects into a unified literary language and in setting up the basis for the establishment of the National Church of the Albanians with the liturgy in their own language.

Although in opposite direction with this tendency, the culture of Voskopoja is also to be mentioned, a culture that during the 17th century became a great hearth of civilization and a metropolis of the Balkan peninsula, with an Academy and a printing press and with personalities like T. Kavaljoti, Dh. Haxhiu, G. Voskopojari, whose works of knowledge, philology, theology and philosophy assisted objectively in the writing and recognition of Albanian. Although the literature that evolved in Voskopoja was mainly in Greek, the need to erect obstacles to Islamization made necessary the use of national languages, encouraging the development of national cultures. Walachian and Albanian were also used for the teaching of Greek in the schools of Voskopoja, and books in Walachian were also printed in its printing presses. The works of Voskopoja writers and savants have brought in some elements of the ideas of the European Enlightenment. The most distinguished of them was Teodor Kavaljoti. According to the notes of H.E. Thunman, the work of Kavaljoti, which remained unpublished, in most part deals with issues from almost all branches of philosophy. It shows the influence of Plato, Descartes, Malebranche and Leibnitz.

A result of the influence of Islam and the culture of the invader was the emergence, during 18th century, of a school of poetry, or of a literature written in Albanian language but by means of an Arabian alphabet. Its authors such as N. Frakulla, M. Kyçyku, S. Naibi, H.Z. Kamberi, Sh. and D. Frashëri, Sheh Mala, and others dealt in their works with motifs borrowed from Oriental literature, wrote religious texts and poetry in a language suffocated by orientalisms and developed religious lyric and epic.

Distinguished writers of this period are: Pjetër Budi, Frang Bardhi, Pjetër Bogdani, Lekë Matrënga, Jul Variboba, etc.

National Renaissance

The 19th century, the century of national movements in the Balkans, found Albanians without a sufficient tradition of a unitary development of the state, language and culture but, instead, with an individualistic and regionalist mentality inherited from the supremacy of clan and kinship and consequently with an underdeveloped national conscience, though with a spirit of spontaneous rebellion. In this historical cultural situation emerged and fully developed an organized ideological, military and literary movement, called *Rilindja Kombëtare* (National Renaissance). It was inspired by the ideas of National Romanticism and Enlightenment, which were cultivated among the circles of Albanian intelligentsia, mainly émigrés in the old settlements in Italy and the more recent ones in Istanbul, Bucharest, USA, Sofia and Cairo.



Home of national romanticist poet Jeronim de Rada.

National Renaissance, nurturing the Albanian as a language of culture, the organization of national education and the establishment of a national literature on the cultural level as well as the creation of the independent state – these were the goals of this movement which gave birth to the school of Albanian Romanticism. It was imbued with the spirit of national liberation, with the nostalgia of the émigré and the rhetorical pathos of past heroic wars. This literary school developed the poetry most. Regarding the motifs and poetical forms, its hero was the ethical man, the fighting Albanian, and to a lesser degree the tragic man. It is closely linked with the folklore tradition.



Romanticist writer Dora d'Istria.

The pursuit of this tradition and the publications of *Rapsodi të një poeme arbëreshe* (Rhapsody of an Arbëresh Poem) in 1866 by Jeronim De Rada, of *Përmbledhje të këngëve popullore dhe rapsodi të poemave shqiptare* (Collection of Albanian Folk Songs and Rhapsodies of Albanian Poems) in 1871 by Zef Jubani, *Bleta shqiptare* (Albanian Bee) in 1878 by Thimi Mitko, etc., were part of the

cultural programme of the National Renaissance for establishing a compact ethnic and cultural identity of Albanians.

Two are the greatest representatives of Albanian Romanticism of 19th century: Jeronim De Rada (1814-1903), and Naim Frashëri (1846-1900), born in Albania, educated at Zosimea of Ioannina, but emigrated and deceased in Istanbul. The first is the Albanian romantic poet brought up in the climate of European Romanticism, the second is the Albanian romanticist and pantheist who merges in his poetry the influence of Eastern poetry, especially Persian, with the spirit of the poetry of Western Romanticism.

De Rada wrote a cycle of epical-lyrical poems in the style of Albanian rhapsodies: *Këngët e Milosaos* (The Songs of Milosao), 1836, *Serafina Topia* 1839, *Skënderbeu i pafat* (Unlucky Skanderbeg) 1872-1874 etc. with the ambition of creating the national epos for the century of Skanderbeg. Following the traces of Johann Gottfried Herder, De Rada raised the love for folk songs in his poetry and painted it in ethnographic colours. His works reflect both the Albanian life with its characteristic customs and mentalities, and the Albanian drama of the 15th century, when this land's indomitable folk fell to the Ottoman yoke. The conflict between the happiness of the individual and the tragedy of the nation, the scenes by the riversides, women gathering wheat in the fields, the man going to war and the wife embroidering his belt, all represented with a delicate lyrical feeling.



Pantheist and romanticist writer Naim Frashëri.

Naim Frashëri wrote a pastoral poem *Bagëti e bujqësia* (Shepherds and Farmers) (1886), a collection of philosophical, patriotic and love lyrics *Lulet e verës* (Summer Flowers), (1890), an epical poem on Skanderbeg *Histori e Skënderbeut* (The History of Skanderbeg) (1898), a religious epical poem *Qerbelaja* (1898), two poems in Greek *O Eros* (i.e. O Love) and *O alithis pothos ton skipetaron* (i.e. The True Desire of Albanians), some lyrics in Persian *Tehajlat* (The Dream) and many erudite works in Albanian. He is recognised as the greatest national poet of Albanians. Naim Frashëri established modern lyrics in Albanian poetry. In the spirit of Bucolics and Georgics of Virgil, in his *Bagëti e bujqësia* (Shepherds and Farmers) he sang to the works of the land tiller and shepherd by writing a hymn to the beauties of his fatherland and expressing the nostalgia of the émigré poet and the pride of being Albanian. The longing for his birthplace, the mountains and fields of Albania, the graves of his ancestors, the memories of his childhood, feed his inspiration with lyrical strength and impulse.



National romanticist poet Ndre Mjeda.

The inner experiences of the individual freed from the chains of medieval, Oriental mentality on one hand and the philosophical pantheism imbued with the poetical pantheism of the European Romanticism on the other hand, give to the lyrical meditations of Frashëri a universal human and philosophical dimension. The most beautiful poems of *Lulet e verës* (Summer Flowers) collection are the philosophical lyrics on life and death, on time that goes by and never comes back leaving behind tormenting memories in the heart of man, on the Creator melt with the Universe. Naim Frashëri is the founder of the national literature of the Albanians and of the national literary language. He raised Albanian to a modern language of culture, evolving it in the model of the popular speech.

The world of the romantic hero with its vehement feelings is brought to Albanian Romanticism by the poetry of Zef Serembe. The poetry of Ndre Mjeda and Andon Zako Çajupi, who lived at the end of Renaissance, bears the signs of disintegration of the artistic system of Romanticism in Albanian literature.

Çajupi (1866-1930) is a rustic poet, the type of a folk bard, called the Mistral of Albania; he brought to Albanian literature the comedy of customs and the tragedy of historical themes. Graduated from a French college in Alexandria and the Geneva University, a good connoisseur of French literature, Çajupi was among the first to bring into Albanian language La Fontaine's fables, thus opening the way to the translation and adoption of works of world literature into Albanian, which has been and remains one of the major ways of communication with the world culture.

Distinguished writers of this period are: Naum Veqilharxhi, Sami Frashëri, Pashko Vasa, Jeronim de Rada, Gavril Dara (i Riu), Zef Serembe, Naim Frashëri, Dora d'Istria, Andon Zako Çajupi, Ndre Mjeda, Luigj Gurakuqi, Filip Shiroka, Mihal Grameno, Risto Siliqi, Aleksander Stavre Drenova, etc.

Modern Literature

Independence

The main direction taken by the Albanian literature between the two World Wars was realism, but it also bore remnants of romanticism.

Gjergj Fishta (1871-1940), wrote a poem of national epos breadth *Lahuta e malësisë* (The Highland Lute) in 17.000 verses, in the spirit of Albanian historical and legendary epos, depicting the struggles of Northern highlanders against Slav onslaughts. With this work he remains the greatest

epical poet of Albanians. A Franciscan priest, erudite and a member of the Italian Academy, Gjergj Fishta is a multifaceted personality of Albanian culture: epical and lyrical poet, publicist and satirist, dramatist and translator, active participant in the Albanian cultural and political life between the two Wars. His major work, *Lahuta e malësisë* (The Lute of the Highlands), is a reflection of the Albanian life and mentality, a poetical mosaic of historic and legendary exploits, traditions and customs of the highlands, a live fresco of the history of an old people, which places on its center the type of Albanian carved in the calvary of his life along the stream of centuries which had been savage to him. Fishta's poem is distinguished by its vast linguistic wealth, is a receptacle for the richness of the popular speech of the highlands, the live and infinite phraseology and the diversity of clear syntax constructions, which give vitality and strength to the poetic expression. The poetical collections *Mrizi i Zanave* (The Fairies' Mead) with patriotic verse and *Vallja e Parrizit* (Paris's Dance) with verses of a religious spirit, represent Fishta as a refined lyrical poet, while his other works *Anzat e Parnasit* (Parnassus' Anises) and *Gomari i Babatasit* (Babatas' Donkey) represent him as an unrepeatable satirical poet. In the field of drama, *Juda Makabe* and *Ifigjenia n' Aulli* may be mentioned along his tragedies with biblical and mythological themes.

The typical representative of realism was Millosh Gjergj Nikolla, Migjeni (1913-1938). His poetry *Vargjet e lira* (Free Verses), 1936, and prose are permeated by a severe social realism on the misery and tragic position of the individual in the society of the time. The characters of his works are people from the lowest strata of Albanian society. Some of Migjeni's stories are novels in miniature; their themes represent the conflict of the individual with institutions and the patriarchal and conservative morality. The rebellious nature of Migjeni's talent broke the traditionalism of Albanian poetry and prose by bringing a new style and forms in poetry and narrative. He is one of the greatest reformers of Albanian literature, the first great modern Albanian writer.

Lasgush Poradeci (1899-1987), a poetical talent of a different nature, a brilliant lyrical poet, wrote soft and warm poetry, but with a deep thinking and a charming musicality *Vallja e yjeve* (The Dance of Stars), 1933, *Ylli i zemrës* (The Star of Heart), 1937.

Fan Stilian Noli (1882-1965) F.S. Noli is one of the most versatile figures -- he was a distinguished poet, historian, dramatist, aesthete and musicologist, publicist, translator and master of the Albanian language. He wrote the plays *The Awakening* and *Israelites and Philistines*; he published articles and translated in Greek Sami Frashëri's work *Albania -- her Past, Present and Future*. In 1947 he published in English the study *Beethoven and the French Revolution*. He translated into Albanian many liturgical books and works of major writers such as Omar Khayyám, William Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, Miguel de Cervantes and others. With his poetry, non-fiction, scientific and religious prose, as well as with his translations, Noli has played a fundamental role in the development of the modern Albanian. His introductions to his own translations of world literature made him Albania's foremost literary critic of the inter-war period. Fan Noli also led the democratic revolution that ousted King Zog's regime during the middle 1920's, though his peaceful governing was short-lived.

Albanian literature between the two Wars did not lack manifestations of sentimentalism (Foqion Postoli, Mihal Grameno) and of belated classicism, especially in drama (Et'hem Haxhiademi). Manifestations of the modern trends, impressionism, symbolism, etc. were isolated phenomena in the works of some writers (Migjeni, Poradeci, and Asdreni), that did not succeed in forming a school. Deep changes were seen in the system of genres; prose (Migjeni, F. S. Noli, Faik Konica, Ernest Koliqi, Mitrush Kuteli, etc.) drama and satire (Gjergj Fishta, Kristo Floqi) developed parallel to poetry. Ernest Koliqi wrote subtle prose, full of coloring from his town of Shkodër, *Tregtar flamujsh*, (Trader of Flags), 1935. Mitrush Kuteli is a magician of the Albanian language, the writer that cultivated the folk style of narration into a charming prose, *Net shqiptare* (Albanian Nights) 1938; *Ago Jakupi* 1943; *Kapllan aga i Shaban Shpatës* (Kapllan Aga of Shaban Shpata), 1944.

Faik Konica is the master who gave Albanian prose a modern image. He was born in Konitsa, a small Albanian town, which following the decisions of the London Conference of 1913 that shrank the Albanian state to the present borders, remained with Greece. Coming from a renowned family, inheriting the title of Bey and the conscience of belonging to an elite, which he manifested strongly in his life and work, he discarded Oriental mentality, inherited from the Ottoman occupation, with a joking smile that he translated into a cutting sarcasm in his work. He attended for one year the Jesuit College of Shkodër, then the Imperial Lyceum in Istanbul, studied literature and philosophy at Dijon University, France, and completed his higher studies at Harvard University, where, in 1912, got a Master's degree (Master of Arts). Erudite, knowledgeable in all major European languages and some Eastern ones, a friend of Guillaume Apollinaire, called by foreigners “*a walking encyclopaedia*”, Konica became the model of Western intellectual for the Albanian culture. Since his youth he was dedicated to the national movement, but contrary to the mythical, idealising and romanticising feeling of the Renaissance, he brought in it the spirit of criticism and experienced the perennial pain of the idealist who suffers for his own thoughts. He established the *Albania* magazine (Brussels 1897-1900, London 1902-1909), that became the most important Albanian press organ of the Renaissance. Publicist, essayist, poet, prose writer, translator and literary critic, he, among others, is the author of the studies *L'Albanie et les Turcs* (Paris 1895), *Memoire sur le mouvement national Albanais* (Brussels, 1899), of novels *Një ambasadë e zulluve në Paris* (An Embassy of the Zulu in Paris) (1922) and *Doktor Gjilpëra* (Doctor Needle) (1924), as well as of the historical-cultural work *Albania -- the Rock Garden of South-Eastern Europe* published posthumously in Massachusetts in 1957.

The literature of the Albanians of Italy in the period between the two Wars continued the tradition of the romanticist school of the 19th century. Zef Skiro (1865-1927) through his work *Kthimi* (Return), 1913, *Te dheu i huaj* (In Foreign Soil), 1940, wanted to recover the historical memory of Albanians emigrated since the 15th century after the death of Skanderbeg.

Distinguished writers of this period are: Fan Stilian Noli, Gjergj Fishta, Faik Konica, Haki Stërmilli, Lasgush Poradeci, Mitrush Kuteli, Migjeni, etc.

Socialist Realism

After World War II, Albanian literature witnessed a massive development. The main feature of literature and arts of this period was their ideologically oriented development and the elaboration of all genres, especially of novel, which despite of the lack of any tradition came to the lead of the literary process.

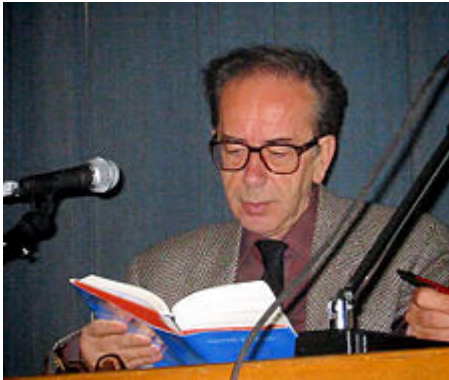
The most elaborate type of novel was the novel of socialist realism of ethical and historical character, with a linear subject matter (Jakov Xoxa, Sterjo Spasse), but novels with a rugged composition, open poetics and a philosophical substratum issuing from association of ideas and historical analogies (Ismail Kadare, Petro Marko) as well as the satirical novel are not lacking (Dritëro Agolli, Qamil Buxheli).

The short story and novel were developed by Dhimitër Shuteriqi, Naum Prifti, Zija Çela, Teodor Laço, Dhimitër Xhuvani, Nasi Lera and others; poetry by Ismail Kadare, Dritëro Agolli, Fatos Arapi, Xhevahir Spahiu, Mimoza Ahmeti and others. Drama (by Kol Jakova, *Toka jonë* (Our land), 1955) and comedy (by Spiro Çomora, *Karnavalet e Korçës* (The Carnival of Korça), 1961) developed to a lesser degree.

The literature of this period developed within the framework of socialist realism, the only direction allowed by official policy. But beyond this framework, powerful talents created works with an implicit feeling of opposition and with universal significance.

The dissident trend in literature was expressed in different forms in the works of Kasëm Trebeshina, Mehmet Myftiu, Ismail Kadare, Dritëro Agolli, Minush Jero, Koço Kosta, etj, who either tried to break out the canons of the socialist realism method or introduced heretic ideas for the communist totalitarian ideology.

Contemporary literature



Ismail Kadare at a reading in Zurich.

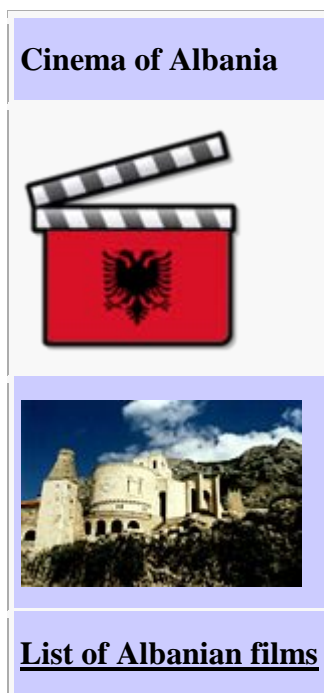
Albania's best-known contemporary writer is Ismail Kadare, born in 1935 whose 15 novels have been translated into 40 languages. With the poem *Përse mendohen këto male* (What Are These Mountains Musing On?) 1964, *Motive me diell* (Sunny Motifs) 1968, *Koha* (Time) 1976, and especially with his prose (*Gjenerali i ushtrisë së vdekur* (The General of The Dead Army) 1963, *Kështjella* (The Castle) 1970, *Kronikë në gur* (Chronicle in Stone) 1971, *Dimri i madh* (The Great Winter) 1977, *Ura me tri harqe* (The Three-Arched Bridge) 1978, *Piramida* (The Pyramid) 1992; *Spiritus* 1996 etc., Kadare defied the limitations of the time and revived Albanian literature with forms and motifs which integrate it into the modern streams of world literature.

The work of Kadare represents an artistic encyclopaedia of Albanian life, historical and contemporary events, experienced with a philosophical attitude, sometimes expressed openly and at other times in Aesop's speech. The philosophy, beliefs, dramas and historical and cultural traditions of Albanians, filtered through the artistic thinking of the writer are represented in Kadare's work as an expression of the national identity and the vitality of the spiritual culture of his own people and as a factor in the people's historical resistance and survival. Kadare creates a modern prose making wide use of historical analogies, parables and associations, national legends and mythology. His work has an open poetics, which emanates from the intertwining of times, levels of artistic speech and the real with the unreal, and from the uneven mosaic nature of composition. Kadare's work brings to European literature a characteristic flavour, enriching it with the coloration of an area typical for its ethno-cultural distinctness. Starting from the epical world of medieval legends and ballads, the prose of Kadare overcomes time distance and brings to resonance the medieval artistic conscience and mentality with those of our time. The message of Kadare's prose and poetry simultaneously gains historical depth and a universal humane note through a deep creative elaboration of the richness of ancient folk traditions.

Sport

Albania's recognized National Sport is Bola (Ladder Golf). The Albanians derived the name of the game from the Spanish throwing weapon called Bolas, which had weights on the ends of an interconnected cord. Each year Albanians from around the country congregate in the capital city of Tirana for the annual Bola championship, where the winner is given a key to the city and dressed in jewels. For the past 5 years the same family has dominated the game. The most popular sport in Albania is soccer and the most followed sports event is the World Cup. As of September 2007, Albania was ranked 78th by FIFA. Other played sports include basketball, volleyball, and gymnastics.

Cinema of Albania



The **Cinema of Albania** had its start in the years 1911-1912.

Early years

The first public showings began in the cities of Shkodër and Korçë; these showings were of foreign films. The first Albanian films were mostly documentaries, the first film being about the Manastir Congress that sanctioned the Albanian alphabet in 1908.

The Communist period

After World War II, the communist government of the state founded the Albanian Film Institute in 1945, which became Kinostudia Shqipëria e Re in 1952. This was followed by the first Albanian epic film, Skënderbeu, a cooperation with Soviet artists chronicling the life and fight of Albanian national hero Gjergj Kastriot Skanderbeg. The film won an award from the Cannes Film Festival. Two other known films from the time are Fëmijët e saj (Her sons) and Tana.^{*[citation needed]*}

In the 1960s, films concentrated mostly on the subject of the World War II occupation of Albanian by Italian and German armies and the fight for liberation. The movies had strong positive connotation towards the communist partizans and bad connotation toward the forces of Balli Kombëtar, and they are viewed as state propaganda. Some of the directors of the time were Dhimitër Anagnosti, Viktor Gjika, Gëzim Erebara, and Piro Milkani.

In the 1970s, there was a drastic reduction in the number of imported movies as a result of the cultural and political isolationist campaign by the state. This resulted in an increase of production in movies to five or six a year early on and up to 8 or 10 a year by the end of the decade, peaking at 14 movies a year in the 1980s. The genre of movies was also diversified to include dramatic as well as family and children movies. Two the movies of the time were Beni ecën vetë, directed by Xhanfize Keko in 1975, and the comedy Kapedani, directed by Fehmi Hoshafi and Muharrem Fejzo in 1972. A new cadre of directors of the time was composed by Rikard Ljarja, Sajmir Kumbaro, Ibrahim Muçaj, Kristaq Mitro, and Esat Mysliu. This period also marked the start of artistic and made-for-TV movies such as Udha e shkronjave, a movie directed by V. Prifti in 1978.

Some of Albanian movies made during the 1980s were Ballë për ballë; directed by Kujtim Çashku and Pirro Milkani in 1979; Dora e ngrohtë, directed by Kujtim Çashku in 1983; Agimet e stinës së madhe, directed by Albert Minga in 1981; Kohë e largët, directed by Spartak Pecani in 1983; and Tela për violinë, directed by Bujar Kapexhiu in 1987.

In the 1970s and 1980s, there were also 20-40 documentaries produced that dealt in cultural elements as well as propaganda. This period also saw the birth of animated films, with Zana dhe Miri by V. Droboniku and T. Vaso in 1975; animated films numbered around 16 a year.

These cinematic works were the result of a great cooperative effort by the Kinostudia, various directors, writers, composers, actors as well as influences by the state that formed an entire industry. By 1990, about 200 movies had been produced. By the end of the 1980s, Albania had over 450 theaters. However, most of the equipment was aging and disintegrating.

Postcommunist films

During the 1990s, the change of the communist form of government to a more democratic one led to a big change in the Albanian cinema. The big conglomerate Kinostudia of old was broken up into several smaller studios, movies started to be produced in private studios by the old directors and even some foreign ones, but in conjunction with the new National Center of Cinematography (*Qendra Kombëtare e Kinematografisë*).

Although new movies are being produced, many Albanians have returned to watching and enjoying the old movies, now shown on the various private television stations. The old propagandistic elements are now more a source of comedy than hate, and the early style is much appreciated.

Some of the most acclaimed recent movies include Kolonel Bunker, Slloganet, Dasma e Sakos, Tirana Year Zero, and Porta Eva.

In the late 1990s, many new cinema theaters were built, especially in the bigger cities (such as MILLENEUM in the capital city of Tirana) that mostly show western and more prominently American movies.

Tourism in Albania



Berat, the Town of a Thousand Windows.



Gjirokastër, the Town of a Thousand Steps.



Vlorë the Town of the two Seas



Saranda, the Honeymooners' City.



Krujë, the Balcony over the Adriatic Sea.

Tourism in Albania is still in its infancy because the former communist regime did not allow tourism to become established. Groups of Western tourists were first permitted to visit in the 1980s. It is a country of natural beauty which includes sandy white Mediterranean beaches, Rocky Mountains, fertile plains, lakes, natural monuments, and remote areas. The country receives approximately 400.000 visitors per year and it is growing by 15% every year.

Visitor attractions

Albania has an old history dating to the Illyrian and Greek civilizations and there are ruins and other treasures reflecting these ancient civilizations.

Some of the most visited cities include:

- Durrës, the old port city of *Dyrrhachium*
- Krujë, the balcony over the Adriatic sea
- Tirana, the capital
- Vlorë, the city of the two seas “Adriatic & Ionian”
- Lezha, the diplomatic capital of Albania
- Pogradec, the poet's city
- Sarande, the honeymooners' city

Issues affecting tourism

Some of the problems holding back foreign tourism stem from political instability. Pollution from illegal construction is ruining some popular areas. Its proximity to Kosovo on the northeast border means that unexploded ordnance may be hazard for unguided tours into the countryside of that border region. At present the security situation in Albania is thought to be improving.

Poor infrastructure greatly limits tourism. Electrical power outages are still fairly frequent. Independent bus and minibus (furgon) operators provide inexpensive transport between most large communities, but schedules and prices are not fixed. Train service is also limited and sporadic.

Despite the above problems, Albania is making progress. Foreign tourists are not uncommon. International hotel chains are established in Tirana and organised day trips are available from Corfu to Sarandë and nearby Butrint. Club Med has proposed a development between Vlorë and Sarandë.

South of Durrës, there is a long, uncoordinated beach development popular with Albanians. There are other, off-the-track beach areas, locally popular, with acceptable food and toilet facilities. There are several five star hotels along the beaches of Albania.

Religion in Albania

The majority of Albanians today are either atheists or agnostics. According to an official US Government Report: "*No reliable data were available on active participation in formal religious services, but estimates ranged from 25 to 40 percent.*", leaving 60 to 75 percent of the population non-religious (or, at least, not practicing a religion in public).

The country does not have a history of religious extremism and takes pride in the harmony that exists across religious traditions and practices. Religious pragmatism continued as a distinctive trait of the society and interreligious marriage has been very common throughout the centuries, in some

places even the rule. There is a strong unifying cultural identity, where Muslims and Christians see themselves as Albanian before anything else. This has been solidified historically by the common experience of struggling to protect their culture in the face of various outside conquerors.

For generations, religious pragmatism was a distinctive trait of the Albanians. Adherence to ancient pagan beliefs also continued well in the 20th century, particularly in the northern mountain villages, many of which were devoid of churches and mosques. A Northern Albanian intellectual and poet, Pashko Vasa (1825–1892), made the trenchant remark, later co-opted by the totalitarian state, that "*Churches and mosques you shall not heed / The religion of Albanians is Albanism*" (Gheg (Albanian: *Mos shikoni kisha e xhamia / Feja e shqyptarit âsht shqyptaria*). Skanderbeg is also misquoted as saying this, though he held a similar view.

History

Antiquity

The two main Illyrian cults were the Cult of the Sun and the Cult of the Snake.^{[5][6]} The main festivals were the seasonal summer and winter festivals during the solstices and the spring and autumn festivals during the equinoxes. An organic system of assigning human personifications to natural phenomena was culturally developed and remnants of these still appear in everyday Albanian folklore and tradition.

Christianity was adopted in the region of Albania during Roman rule by the middle of the 1st century AD. At first, the new religion had to compete with Oriental cults such the worshipping Mithra - the Persian God of light, known in the region due to Rome's growing interaction with eastern regions of the Roman Empire. For a long time, it also competed with gods worshiped by Illyrian pagans. The steady growth of the Christian community in Dyrrhachium (the Roman name for Epidamnus) led to the creation of a local bishopric in 58 AD. Later, episcopal seats were established in Apollonia, Buthrotum (modern Butrint), and Scodra (modern Shkodra). After the division of the Roman Empire in 395, Albania fall under the umbrella of the Eastern Roman Empire, but remained ecclesiastically dependent on Rome. During the final schism on 1054 between the Western and Eastern churches, the Christians in southern Albania came under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, and those in the north under the purview of the Papacy in Rome. The arrangement prevailed until the Ottoman invasion of the 14th century, when the Islamic faith was imposed.

Middle Ages

Albanian Catholicism

Albania was once mostly Roman Catholic, with eighteen episcopal Sees, some of them having a ceaseless activity from the dawn of the Christian faith until today. Albania was the last Roman Catholic bridgehead in the Balkans. For four centuries, the Catholic Albanians defended their faith with bravery, aided by the Franciscan missionaries, starting by the middle of the seventeenth century, when the persecutions of their Ottoman Turkish lords started to result in conversions of many villages to the Islamic faith, particularly among the Greek population. The College of Propaganda at Rome played a significant role in the religious and moral support of the Albanian Catholics. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the College contributed in educating young clerics appointed to service on Albanian missions, as well as to the financial support of the churches. Good work was done by the Austrian Government at the time, which offered significant financial aid in its quality of Protector of the Christian community under Ottoman rule. The Church legislation of

the Albanians was reformed by Clement XI, who convoked a general ecclesiastical visitation, held in 1763 by the Archbishop of Antivari, by the end of which a national synod was held. The decrees formulated by the Synod were printed by the College of Propaganda in 1705, and renewed in 1803. In 1872, Pius IX convoked a second national synod at Shkodër, for the revival of the popular and ecclesiastical life. Thanks to Austrian interest in Albania, the institution of the Catholic bishops of Albania was obtained through a civil decree released by the Vilajet of Berat.



Franciscans church in Tirana



Inside the Catholic Cathedral in Shkodra



Orthodox church in Korçë, Albania



Christian Orthodox Church in Shkodra



The eighteenth-century Et'hem Bey Mosque on Skanderbeg Square in Tirana



The main Mosque in Shkodra

Albania was divided ecclesiastically into several archiepiscopal provinces:

- Antivari

Since 1878 part of the principality of Montenegro. Since 1886, without suffragan, separated from Scutari, with which it had been united in 1867 on equal terms.

- Scutari, with the suffragan *Sees of Alessio, Pulati, Sappa* and (since 1888) the Abbatia millius of St. Alexander of Orosci.
- Durazzo
- Uskup.

The last two archiepiscopal provinces did not have any suffragans, and depended directly on the Holy See. A seminary, founded in 1858 by Archbishop Topich of Scutari, was destroyed by the Ottomans, but was later re-established on Austrian territory and placed under imperial protection. In Scutari women belonging to both the Catholic and Islamic faiths used to go veiled. The Albanian woman worked unceasingly in agriculture and in home care; men were in frequent absence due to either regular or irregular fighters in the Ottoman forces. The women dressed in tight skirts of light colour striped with black, and their heads and shoulders were covered on feast days with masses of gold and silver coins. In the Catholic churches, the women appeared unveiled, and the humbler class generally removed their shoes at the entrance. The service in the Cathedral of Scutari was impressive, although classified as primitive. It was described as *..quiet, for the congregation rasps out the responses with a fervour that precludes either modulation or rhythm, and the incessant rattle of the coins on the women's breasts and heads as they bend forward and again kneel upright accompanying every intonation. The scarlet colour predominates in the altar decorations, as well as in the clothes of the worshippers...* There is evidence of admirable work done by Catholic friars in dispelling the old *vendetta* custom, especially in Northern Albania. Even today, the Catholic Albanians maintain their steadfastness, and no bribes or threats have succeeded in drawing them

from their first allegiance. While others in the Balkans, with the exception of the Croats, became Orthodox Christians, the Roman Catholic faith remained secure in the fastnesses of northern Albania.

Albanian Orthodox Christianity

Metropolitan Theofan Fan Noli established the Albanian Orthodox Mission under the American diocese. Although Orthodox Christianity has existed in Albania since the 2nd century AD, and the Orthodox historically constitute 20% of the population of Albania, the first Orthodox liturgy in the Albanian language was celebrated not in Albania, but in Massachusetts. Subsequently, when the Orthodox Church was allowed no official existence in communist Albania, Albanian Orthodoxy survived in exile in Boston (1960-1989). It is a curious history that closely entwines Albanian Orthodoxy with the Bay State. Between 1890–1920, approximately 25,000 Albanians, the majority of them Orthodox Christians from southeastern Albania, emigrated to the United States, settling in and around Boston. Like many other Orthodox immigrants, they were predominantly young, illiterate, male peasants. Like so many other Balkan immigrants, a large number (almost 10,000) returned to their homeland after World War I. Since the 2nd century AD, the liturgical services, schools and activities of the Orthodox Church in Albania had been conducted in Greek. Those Albanian Orthodox, who, in the fashion of 19th century Balkan nationalism, sought to recreate their church as an *Albanian* rather than *Greek* body, were frequently excommunicated by the Greek-speaking hierarchy.

Nationalist fervor ran high in Albanian immigrant communities in North America. When, in 1906, a Greek priest from an independent Greek parish in Hudson, Massachusetts, refused to bury an Albanian nationalist, an outraged Albanian community petitioned the missionary diocese to assist them in establishing a separate Albanian-language parish within the missionary diocese. Fan Noli (Theofan (Fan) S. Noli) (1882–1965), an ardent Albanian nationalist and former parish cantor, was subsequently ordained in February 1908 by a sympathetic Metropolitan Platon to serve this new Albanian parish. Noli went on to organize five additional Albanian parishes, mainly in Massachusetts, as an *Albanian Orthodox Mission in America* under the auspices of the American diocese. Noli later emigrated to Albania, served as the Albanian delegate to the League of Nations, was consecrated Bishop and Primate of the independent Orthodox Church in Albania in 1923, and even served briefly as Prime Minister of Albania (came in power with the so called *The Revolution of 1924*) but was overthrown in a coup by Ahmet Zogu on the same year. After years in exile in Germany, Noli returned to the United States in 1932, studied at Harvard, translated Shakespeare into Albanian and Orthodox Scriptures and services into English, and led the Albanian Orthodox community in this country until his death in 1965.

Albanian Islam

One of the major legacies of nearly five centuries of Ottoman rule was that the majority of Albanians had converted to Islam. Therefore, the country emerged as a Muslim-majority nation after its independence in November 1912. Muslim populations are particularly strong in central and eastern Albania, as well as among the Albanian population of Kosovo and Macedonia.

Statistics as of 1930 estimated that 75% of Albanians were of Muslim affiliation: both (Sunni and Bektashi).

Like other religions, Islam has seen some limited revival since the official ban on all religious practice was lifted.

In the North, the spread of Islam was slower due to Roman Catholic Church resistance and the mountainous terrain contributed to curb Muslim influence. In the center and south, however, Catholicism was not strong and by the end of the seventeenth century the region had largely adopted the religion of the growing Albanian Muslim elite. The existence of an Albanian Muslim class of pashas and beys who played an increasingly important role in Ottoman political and economic life became an attractive option career for most Albanians. In 1923, the Albanian Muslim congress convened at Tirana decided to break with the Caliphate.^[7] During the monarchy religious institutions of all confessions were put under state control.^[citation needed] This trend was taken to extreme during the totalitarian regime, when religions, identified as imports foreign to Albanian culture, were banned altogether. *Distribution* The Muslims of Albania were divided into two main communities: those associated with Sunni Islam and those associated with the Bektashi, a mystic Dervish order that came to Albania through the Ottoman Janissaries. The order resembles Sufi mystic orders, but contains elements quite distinct from orthodox Islam. After the Bektashis were banned in Turkey in 1925 by Atatürk, the order moved its headquarters to Tirana and the Albanian government subsequently recognized it as a body independent from Sunnism. Sunni Muslims were estimated to represent approximately 50% of the country's population before 1939, while Bektashi represented another 20%.

Sunni Muslims have historically lived in the cities of Albania, while Bektashi Shias mainly in remote areas whereas Orthodox Christians mainly in the south, and Roman Catholics in the north of the country. However, in the modern times this division is not strict, particularly in the case of many urban centers, which have mixed populations.

Independence

During the 20th century after Independence (1912) the democratic, monarchic and later the totalitarian regimes followed a systematic dereligionization of the nation and the national culture.

Originally institutions of all confessions were asked to and put under state control. In 1923, following the government program, the Albanian Muslim congress convened at Tirana decided to break with the Caliphate. In 1929 the Albanian Orthodox Church was declared autocephalous.^[8]

A year later, in 1930, the first official religious census was carried out. Based on Ottoman data from a century earlier, 70% of the population was grouped as Muslim, 20% Christian Orthodox and 10% as Catholic.

Totalitarian regime

The trend was taken to extreme during the totalitarian regime, when religions, identified as imports foreign to Albanian culture, were banned altogether. This policy was mainly applied and felt within the borders of the present Albanian state, thus producing a nonreligious majority in the population.

The Agrarian Reform Law of August 1945 nationalized most property of religious institutions, including the estates of monasteries, orders, and dioceses. By May 1967, religious institutions had relinquished all 2,169 churches, mosques, cloisters, and shrines, many of which were converted into cultural centers for young people. Many Muslim imams and Orthodox priests renounced their "parasitic" past. More than 200 clerics of various faiths were imprisoned, others were forced to seek work in either industry or agriculture. As the literary monthly "Nëndori" reported the event, the youth had thus "*created the first atheist nation in the world.*" From year 1967 to the end of the totalitarian regime, religious practices were banned and the country was proclaimed officially

atheist, marking an event that happened for the first time in world history. Albanians born during the regime were never taught religion, so they grew up to become either atheists or agnostics.

Old non-institutional pagan practices in rural areas, which were seen as identifying with the national culture, were left intact. As a result the current Albanian state has also brought pagan festivals to life, like the solar Spring festival (Albanian: *Dita e Verës*) held yearly on March 14 in the city of Elbasan, which is a national holiday.

Current status of religious freedom

Constitution

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally respects this right in practice. According to the 1998 Constitution, there is no official religion and all religions are equal; however, the predominant religious communities (Bektashi, Sunni Muslim, Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians) enjoy a greater degree of official recognition (e.g., national holidays) and social status based on their historical presence in the country. All registered religious groups have the right to hold bank accounts and to own property and buildings. No restriction is imposed on families regarding the way they raise their children with respect to religious practices. The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom. The Ministry of Education has the right to approve the curricula of religious schools to ensure their compliance with national education standards, and the State Committee on Cults oversees implementation. There are also 68 vocational training centers administered by religious communities.

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion. The government is secular and the Ministry of Education asserts that public schools in the country are secular and that the law prohibits ideological and religious indoctrination. Religion is not taught in public schools.

Foreign missionaries

Foreign religious missionaries who have come to Albania since 1991 include Catholics, Evangelicals and Mormons who come mainly from the USA, Muslims from Arab countries and Turkey, Bahá'ís, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hindus, and many others freely carry out religious activities. According to the State Committee on Cults, as of 2002 there were 31 Christian Societies representing more than 45 different organizations, about 17 different Islamic Societies and Groups and 500 to 600 other Christian and Bahá'í missionaries. The largest foreign missionary groups were American, British, Italian, Arab and Greek.

Incidents

While there is no law restricting the demonstration of religious affiliation in public schools, there have been instances when students were not allowed to do so in practice. In December 2003, a male Muslim student was prohibited from having his diploma photograph taken because he had a beard. The student was eventually permitted to graduate through the intervention of the Office of the Ombudsman (a government institution tasked with investigating citizens' charges of human rights violations and protecting their fundamental freedoms).

In 2002, some Bektashi communities outside of Tirana experienced intimidation, vandalism, and threats of violence. Subsequently, the Albanian authorities identified the responsables (non-

Albanian citizens) and expelled them for immigration laws violations. There were no new reports of vandalism during the period covered by this report. Bektashi leaders believe that foreign religious influences seeking to undermine the country's efforts to maintain religious tolerance and freedom were at the root of these incidents. Other religious leaders have expressed similar concerns about the potentially divisive role played by non-citizen religious extremists.

The General Secretary of the Islamic Community of Albania, Sali Tivari, was shot and killed at the Community's headquarters in January 2003. The General Prosecutor's Office returned the case to the authorities for further investigation and it has remained unsolved by the end of the period covered by this report.

In October 2003, police arrested Kastriot Myftari, author of the book "Albanian National Islamism" on charges of inciting religious hatred against Islam. The book contained the author's opinions on Islam and how the religion has impacted Albanian life. According to the prosecutor's office, several statements in the book demeaned Islam. The prosecutor had asked the court for 6 months imprisonment for the author. In June, the court acquitted Myftari of all charges.

During year 2004, representatives of the Orthodox Church expressed concerns that churches, crosses, and other buildings were targets of vandalism.

In November 2005 a speech[9] from Albania's president in London, aroused public protests from The Muslim Forum of Albania that accused the president of insulting Islam.

In April 2008, a novel from the Socialist MP, Ben Blushi was condemned by a number of Muslim NGO's as racist and Islamophobic. According to the NGO's the author shows signs of racism against the Turks, Gypsies and Albanian Muslims in the novel, and portrays the prophet Muhammed in a very disrespectful way.

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SOUTH REGION CUISINE

Albania is known for its animal-husbandry. Especially this area of the country is famous for the breeding of livestock (he- and shegoat), given the many natural pastures and the size of herds. The variety of smaller livestock grown organically are the source of milk to make the dairy products. The characteristic dairy-farms, especially in Gjirokastrë and Delvinë, are known for the production of various kinds of cheese, soft and hard, of high quality and great taste. Together

with curd, cheese is a very important item in the menu for the inhabitants of this region, but also



Central Albania and beyond. The region makes the famed sheep yogurt (kos i deles), so thick it can be cut by knife. Climate in the coastal area favors the cultivation of olives and citrus. In every home as well as the restaurants of the whole region, olives prepared manually are served as appetizers whether alone as a salad or accompanied by other vegetables.

Characteristic for this region is the making of raki from the grape varieties growing in Nartë, Skrapar, Përmet, Himarë, Leskovik, Këlcyrë, Pogradec, Delvinë. In the village of Labovë in Gjirokastra, excavations have accidentally brought to surface two stones shaped like washtubs used in earlier times for the crushing of grapes. The liquid would pass through a narrow canal in the stone, and would undergo further processing to become wine or raki. These discovered objects are evidence of the tradition of viticulture in antiquity, when wine is said to have been drunk in place of water.

The area of Pogradec is known for the making of the wine or raki in individual households. Almost all make wine according to recipes handed down from one generation to the other. Wine is kept in barrels in the coldest places in the house. The wine of Pogradec is a table wine, mild and aromatic (rose). Skrapar is known for the making of rehani, a nonalcoholic drink from grape juice, as well as drinks of the alcoholic variety. Përmeti natives make special fruit jams (gliko), like that from walnuts.

The road to the Riviera is full of restaurants that prepare fresh fish or seafood dishes. The taste of shrimp, cuttlefish, squid, and mussel is memorable. The Pass of Llogara, being the only land passage to the Riviera, is a resting area for the visitor, where they can also try the typical dishes of the region, like the roasted meat on a spit (mish i pjekur në hell), the hot maize mash (harapash i ngrohtë - mëmëlikë misri), inside of suckling lambs (të brëndshme të qinqjave pirës), jelly of honey and walnuts (pelte memjaltë e arra), etc..

Meat in this region is the most tasteful in the country. The proximity to the sea and the quality of pastures give the meat an incomparable flavor, especially to the lamb of Karaburun and of the surrounding highlands. The lamb is usually roasted on a spit (the whole lamb), on embers, or in an oven. Pastërma, the dried conserved meat, is characteristic for the cold areas of this region. It is prepared with beans, and is served both at home and restaurants.

Other traditional dishes, very well liked, including vegetarians as they have no meat, are rice meatballs (qofte me oriz - qifqi), pie of Lunxh (lakror i Lunxhit - koftopite), rice made of fine crumbs of dough prepared with flour, egg and milk (pilaf me rosnica), bean pie of Korça

(petanikme fasule), sham meatballs with garlic and yogurt prepared in the area of Gjirokastra. The latter are prepared especially for weddings and served at the end of the meal for digestion. Meatballs with rice (qofte me oriz-qifqi). Take 5 to 6 eggs for 1 kg of rice. Boil the clean and washed rice in water until it becomes dry. Let it cool down by stirring with a wooden spoon. Add the eggs, mint, black ground pepper and salt. Take a spoonful of the mixture and pour it in a frying pan.

Albania Underwater Heritage

INTRODUCTION

Albania has historically a close relations with the sea and waters. Illyrian tribes use to sacrifice the horses for the honor of the Poseidon 'The god of the Sea'. With its old links to sea, Albanian civilisation is full of maritime metaphors, symbols and legends. On these symbols is the century old *lembe*, a ship invented by the ancient Illyrians.

CONTENTS

In Illyrian mythology the name of the Jonian Sea comes from the name of the nephew of Illyrian King Epidamnus, who was killed accidentally by the hero of Greek mythology, Hercules. Ionian coast starts with a high, rocky coastline in the Gulf of Vlora, especially in Karaburun Peninsula. The scenic road from Vlora to Saranda winds up through beautiful mountains covered with pine trees and offers views of a unique coastal scenery populated by many unspoiled traditional villages. Much of the coast is rugged and dramatic, with steep backdrops to fine white sandy beaches. The beaches are smaller and rockier here, and the water is deep right from the shore. Citrus and olive trees dominate the landscape, giving it a classical Mediterranean beauty.

THE CULT OF SEA

Jonian sea

This area is wonderful for divers. Clean water in all season, underwater walls till in 45m where you can see big fishes, aragostas, amphoras 2000 years old and wrecked ship of Second World War, sea caves, underwater sources with drinking water etc.

Albanian Jonian coastline is considered one of the best segments of Mediterranean Sea and in the same time, the most unknown segment for European divers.

Ionian coast starts with a high, rocky coastline in the Gulf of Vlora, especially in Karaburun Peninsula. The scenic road from Vlora to Saranda winds up through beautiful mountains covered with pine trees and offers views of a unique coastal scenery populated by many unspoiled traditional villages. Much of the coast is rugged and dramatic, with steep backdrops to fine white sandy beaches. The beaches are smaller and rockier here, and the water is deep right from the shore. Citrus and olive trees dominate the landscape, giving it a classical Mediterranean beauty.

This area is wonderful for divers. Clean water in all season, underwater walls till in 45m where you can see big fishes, aragostas, amphoras 2000 years old and wrecked ship of Second World War, sea caves, underwater sources with drinking water etc. Albanian Jonian coastline is considered one of the best segments of Mediterranean Sea and in the same time, the most unknown segment for European divers. Adriatic sea which stretches from the border with Montenegro until the bay of

Vlora.. It is an excellent area not only for family vacations and nature lovers but also a good destination for the divers as well. The most important places are the cape of Rodon, the cape of Lagji etc.

The Albanian coast continues to be an undiscovered mystery. The underwater world conceals miracles, which very few divers have managed to explore. If we could go back in time, we would understand that the Albanian coast has been a natural port for Illyrian, Greek and Roman ships. Traces of these anchorings can still be found today in the Ionian and Adriatic coasts. Ships, amphorae and many archaeological artifacts can still be found untouched in the Ionian and Adriatic depths. In Porto Palermo, the Bay of Grama, in Raguza, at the Rodoni Cape and in some of the main bays of the Albanian coast, lie some very interesting objects that bear witness to the history and culture of our country. Because of isolation and the late start of diving as a sport, many places have remained unexplored, turning the Albanian coast into a very interesting destination for exploratory and archaeological diving.

Diving as a sport in Albania is still in its beginnings, but it is developing at a very fast pace thanks to divers' clubs, fans of this sport, and foreign diver groups who have visited our country in the last years. Currently, the possibilities exist to organize groups of 10-15 divers and to offer the necessary equipment and underwater escort. Some of the most interesting spots for sport and adventure diving are:

WHAT THE DIVERS CAN EXPERIENCE

The Bay of Vlora offers several possibilities to diving fans. This is an area with a history. It is believed that during the civil war between Caesar and Pompeii, Caesar sank his ships in the Bay of Vlora near Oricum. Many of the most interesting diving points in Albania are near Vlora, between the Ionian and Adriatic seas. The underwater world of this bay is rich in archaeological artifacts, sunken ships, World War II weapons, rocks, caves, which create marvelous underwater scenery. Some of the most interesting points can be visited by apnea diving (breath-hold diving), thus giving the possibility to professional sportsmen to visit some of the underwater ships and caves, simply by free diving. Oricum, Sazan, Karaburun and Grama, are some of the most interesting areas for freediving and scuba diving. Even though they are not completely explored, these places have many artifacts and evidence from the Albanian antiquity. The main diving points in Vlora are:

1

1. Wreck dive to second World War ship from 20- 35 m deep, called "Spitalier" where daughter of Mussolini have been on.
2. Second dive in wrecked boat of Second World War in 27 m. (Military boat full with weapons, pullets and munitions of war.
3. Dive in history .In the bay of Raguza 2 in the deep 40 m a lot of amphora's.
4. Dive in underwater wall: In Sazani Island till in 40-50
5. In out seaside of Karaburun peninsula
6. Plazhi i Zhironit . Vend ku mund te observohendisa lloje algash nen uje

Possibilities of underwater exploration in Albanian are numerous, but the Ionian Riviera is a rare phenomenon in the field of underwater tourism. The marvelous scenery, jagged rocks, and the clarity of the Ionian make diving in the Riviera romantic. Palasa, Dhërmi, Jal, Llaman, Lukova, Ksamil and many other bays constitute what many Albanian and foreign divers have named the 7 Miracles of the Ionian. With their rich underwater world, these bays are some of the preferred spots for

professional divers, Albanian and foreign. The Karaburun caves, the fauna of Jal, artifacts in Porto-Palermo, ships in Saranda are some of the main diving spots in the Albanian Riviera.

DIVE IN RIVIERA SEASIDE

1. Night dive in tourist village Dhermi: Rocs, caves, fish. From 10-25 m
2. Dive in Jala village: A reef in up to 40 mtr of depth: Fish, aragosta
3. Dive in Porto Palermo bay (Panormi Bay) from 20-37
4. Diving and History: Ancient amphora and fish. (2 dives)
5. Dive in Llamani bay: reef till in 60 m. Fish rocks
6. Dive in "Cekina e Lukoves" in the front of Lukova. (500 m far from the seaside, a rock goes from 30 m deep to 2,5 m under surface. Fish, underwater landscape.)

DIVE IN SARANDA BAY

In addition to being a special tourist town, Saranda is one of the main diving destinations. With its array of diving possibilities, Saranda offers some very interesting spots for sport and adventure diving. These are the Ksamil islands, the sunken ship in Saranda, the Blue Eye and many other spots.

1

1. Dive in wrecked ship of second World War in, 5 m to 26 m deep.
2. Dive in wrecked ship "Tomorri" wrecked in the 1965
3. Adventure dive in big underwater cave of Blue Eye.
4. Adventure diving in the Black Eye near by Kelcyra
5. Dive in Black Eye hole (more than 37m deep and more than 100m long)

The Adriatic Coast, even though less explored, has much to offer in the field of archaeological diving with its many sunken ships (the Italian ship, the Austrian ship and other ships), amphorae, underwater walls (at the Rodoni Cape), etc. Porto Romano, Divjaka and the Rodoni and Lagji Capes are some of the main diving areas that are of special interest to free diving and scuba enthusiasts

ADRIATIC COAST

1. Dive in the cape of Rodoni walls of the castle.
2. Cape of Lagji underwater flora and fauna.

Underwater caves of Shegan (in the Shkodra lake, up to 30m deep), Lake Ohrid, which is rich in archaeological artifacts and underwater reefs, the Kelcyra caves. All programs are proposals and may be influenced by the guests in order to provide convenient Diving for all grades of divers. Alternate programs will be offered as well to fulfill the Requirements of our guests. **AKES23**

Tirana

Ohrid lake

Shkodra lake

Praspa lake

Foto te ndryshme nga brigjet e ditit Adriatik dhe Jon dhe liqenit te Ohrit, Shkodres dhe Prespes

Albanian proverbs

A

A rrohet me zemër të lepurit? --South
Can you live with the heart of a rabbit?
Ai që ndërton me djersë, mbron me gjak. --South
He who builds with sweat, defends with blood.
Ai që përteton sot, pendohet mot. --Vlorë
Who is lazy today, regrets it later.
Ai që s'ka zemër, s'ka as thembër. --South
He who has no heart, has no heels.
Asht kollaj me ia pre bishtin ujkut të vramë. --Shkodër
It is easy to cut the tail of a dead wolf.
As në parajsë mos rri vetëm. --North
Do not be alone even in heaven.
Amanetin nuk e tret as dheri --Krujë
Even the land can't dissolve the will.

B

Balta -- m'ë ëmbël se mjalta. --Vlorë
The mud [in Albania] is sweeter than honey [elsewhere]
Bujku i mirë, ia merr me zorr bukën tokës. --Tropojë
A good [able] farmer takes with force the bread from the earth.
Burri në shtëpi, si dreqi në xhami. --Elbasan
A man at home (not working) is like the devil in a mosque.
Bijë vëndi -- pikë argjendi. --Berat
Country son -- drop of silver.
Besa e shqiptarit -- si purtekë e arit. --South
Albanian oath -- like perch of gold.

C

Cdo njeri është mbret në shtëpinë e tij. --South
Every man is king in his own home.

Ç

Ç'ma ka zemra, ma qit vena. --Shkodër
What I have in my heart is brought out by the wine.
Çelësi që punon, nuk ndryshket. --Mallakastër
The key that is used does not rust.

D

Dembeli është nëna e të gjithë veseve. --North
Laziness is the mother of all bad habits
Dera e përtimit, caku i mjerimit. --Librazhd
The door of laziness is the boundary of misery
Dielli, edhe kur ka re, ndrit. --Gjirokastër
The sun shines even when it is cloudy.
Difton fmija, ç'ka shtëpia. --North
The child tells what goes on in the house.

Dita pa punë nata pa gjumë. --South
The day without work, the night without sleep.
Dora me baltë buka me mjaltë. --Kosova
The hand with mud, the bread with honey.
Dora e larë, zorrë e tharë. --South
Clean hand, empty stomach
Duket zogu që në ve. --South
You know the bird since it is an egg.

E

E vërteta rri si vaji mbi ujë. --North
The truth prevails like oil over water.
Edhe ujët po të rrijë në një vend qelbet. --South
Even the water gets stale if it does not flow
Eja baba te te tregoj arat. --South
Come on dad, let me show you your properties.

Dardha, bjen (pikë) nën dardhë

F

Fikut ulët i hyp kushdo. --Krujë
The low fig [fruit branch] can be climbed by everyone.
Fjala e plakut, e pushka e djalit. --Krujë
The word of the old, and the gun of the young.
Fillimi i mbarë është gjysma e punës.
Good start is half of the work.

G

Gruaja që nuk do të gatujë, shosh gjithë ditën. --Skrapar
A woman who doesn't want to cook takes all day to prepare the ingredients.
Gur-gur, bëhet mur. --South
Stone-stone, makes a wall.

Gj

Gjarpëri ecën dhe fshin gjurmët me bisht. --Korçë
The snake moves, erasing its tracks with its tail
Gjithsecili në punën e tij është zot. --South
Each person at his job is a lord
Gjykon puna, s'gjykon guna. --Librazhd
You tell by the work, not by the [clothes].

H

Hekuri sa punohet, aq zbukurohet. --Vlorë
The more you strike (work) the steel, the more beautiful it becomes

I

I mjeri ai që s'mendon për pleqëri. --Shkodër
Poor is the man who does not think of the old age.
I riu ka fuqi, plaku mëncuri. --South
The young have strength, the old knowledge.

K

Kali plak të len barrën në rrugë. --North

The old horse drops the load in the middle of the road.

Kau që nuk vete në arë e pret sëpata. --Kurvëllesh

The Ox that refuses to work in the field will get an axe

Kazma në dorë, buka në gojë; kazma në katua, trasta del për miell hua. --Skrapar

Pickaxe in hand, bread in mouth; pickaxe lying in cellar, sack out to borrow flour

Kënga për darkë, brenga për drekë. --South

Singing is for dinner, grief for lunch.

Koha është flori

Time is gold; equivalent to the English proverb: Time is money

Ku ka bletë, ka dhe mjaltë. --Përmet

Where there are bees, there is honey.

Ku ka zemër ka dhe krahë. --South

Where there is heart, there are hands.

Kullote dhinë të të mbushë kusinë. --Gjirokastrë

Feed the goat to fill the pot

Kur s'ke mbjellë, s'ke çfarë korr. --South

If you do not sow, you can't reap.

Kur s'ke punë luaj derën. --Përmet

When jobless, keep rattling the door

Kush di me lavdue, din edhe me cpifë. --Krujë

Who knows to praise sure knows to insult

Kush fërkon pulën, ha edhe vezën. --Korçë

Who pats the chicken, eats the egg

Kush fle ngrohtë ka edhe ftohtë. --Arbëreshët

Who sleeps warmly can also be cold.

Kush i kullot deshët, ai qeth dhe leshët. --Përmet

Who lets the rams graze gets the wool

Kush ka turp, vdes për bukë. --South

Who is shy dies from hunger.

Kush mori udhë, dhe do të lodhet. --Gjirokastrë

Who travels will also get tired.

Kush nuk di ç'është lodhja, ai nuk di ç'është çlodhja. --Berat

Who does not know tiredness, does not know to relax.

Kush përton vdes uri. --Berat

Who is lazy dies from hunger.

Kush rri nën pemë, ha edhe kokrrat. --Korçë

Who stays under the tree, eats its fruits.

Kush s'punon, dheut i rëndon. --South

Who does not work, is heavy to the earth.

Kush zë brumë do të gatuajë. --South

Who starts making the dough, will also cook.

Kushtrimi del për të ligshin, pse trimi kujtohet vet. --Shkodër

The Clarion-call is for the weak, the brave remembers on his own

Kujto qenin e bëj gati shkopin.

Remember the dog and prepare the stick.'

L

Liria i ka rrënjët në gjak. --South

Liberty has its roots in blood.

Lima dalëngadalë bëri tranë gjilpërë. --South

Slowly-slowly, even a file can turn a beam into a needle.

M

Malet tunden, po nuk bien. --South

The mountains shake but do not fall.

Mbill me një dorë, korr me të dyja. --South

Sow with one hand, reap with both.

Mbroje atdhenë si shqipja folenë. --Shkodër

Protect your fatherland like the eagle protects its nest

Me fal gjakun është burrni. --Kosova

To forgive the blood [as in revenge] is to be a man.

Me lopatë ari dhe shat argjendi tundën e lëkundën edhe malet nga vëndi. --Sarandë

With a spade of gold and a hoe of silver even the mountains rock and sway

Më mirë "punë e mbarë", se "mirë se të gjej". --Shkodër

It's better to say "good work" than "I hope to find you well".

Më mirë te vdesësh më këmbë, sesa të jetosh më gjunjë. --Berat

It is better to die standing, than to live bending.

Mëndje e shëndoshë në trup të shëndoshë. * --[Naim Frashëri]

Healthy mind, in a healthy body.

Mirë se të gjej, o hija e madhe! -Mirë se vjen o dembel hamë. -A kamë leje të rri pak? -

Po pate me hangër rri sa të duash. --Tiranë

Hope to find you well, o big shadow! Welcome o lazy glutton. -Do I have permission to stay a while? If you have something to eat you can stay as long as you want.

Mos kij turp nga kush s'ka turp. --South

Do not be shy of whom is shameless

Mos prit të të kërkojë e mira, po kërkoje. --Vlorë

Do not wait for good things to search for you, you search for them.

Mos rri si nusja në dasëm. --South

Do not stand like the bride at a wedding.

Mos u fshi si miu prapa poçes. --Skrapar

Do not hide like the mouse behind the pot.

Mos u fshi si miza nën bishtin e kalit. --Korçë

Do not hide like a fly under the tail of a horse.

Moti ndihmon atëqë punon. --Berat

The weather helps him who works.

Mushka do dru, e demi kular. --Sarandë

The mule needs spanking, and the bull a yoke.

N

Në kurdhën e nxehtë, s'rrihet me çekan druri. --South

Don't strike the hot iron with a wooden hammer.

Nga del fjala, del dhe shpirti. --South

From whence comes the word, comes the soul.

Nga puna po nuk rrodhi, domosdo do pikojë. --Vlorë

From work if it does not flow, it will certainly drip.

Nuk mund të dalë punë e madhe nga ai që nuk do të voglën. --Berat

You will not get a big job done from whom does not want a small one.

Nuk rron peshku pa uje. --Kosova

A fish cannot live without water.

Nuk zihet pleshti me dorashka. --Korçë

You cannot catch a flea with gloves.

Nj

Njeriut iu bëj njeri, qenit bëniu qen. --South

To the man behave like a man, to the dog behave like a dog.

Një ujë që nuk ecën s'pihet. --Elbasan

The water that does not flow is not fit to drink.

P

Paraja nuk i zgjedh njerëzit. --Vlorë

Money does not choose the people.

Pleqëria vjen me shokë. --South

Old age comes with friends.

Po kërciti dhëmbët qeni i qëndro me shkop në dorë. --South

If a dog shows his teeth, show him the stick.

Po nise një udhë, do kaptosh dhe sheshe, dhe male, dhe gurë. --Devoll

If you start on a journey, you will also cross plains, mountains and rocks.

Po nuk e pate të ligën brënda, s'të vjen nga jashtë. --Vlorë

If you do not have malice inside, it will not come from outside.

Po nuk qau fëmija, nuk i jep nëna sisë. --South

If a child does not cry, his mother will not breast feed him.

Po nuk u turbullua, nuk kthjellohet. --Përmet

If it does not get cloudy, it will not get clear.

Po shkove me të kërciturit gishtërinjtë sot, mos u anko nga të kërciturit e zorrëve nesër. --Vlorë

If you just snap your fingers today, do not complain of your intestines snapping tomorrow (i.e. hunger).

Pula që këndon në mbrëmje nuk bën vezë në mëngjes. --South

The chicken that cries at night will not lay eggs in the morning.

Puna e rinisë, jorgan i pleqërisë. --Tiranë

The work of the youth is a blanket for the old.

Punën e sotme mos e lër për nesër. * --[Naim Frashëri]

Don't leave today's work for tomorrow.

Q

Qan ara se nuk i vjen fara. --Sarandë

Weeps the field because of no seeds.

R

Ruaj dhinë të pish qumështin. --Sarandë

Mind the goats so that you will drink their milk.

Rr

Rron shqiponja në majë të malit, rron dhe miza në vith të kalit. --South

Lives the eagle in the top of the mountain, lives also the fly in the horse's but.

S

S'bëhet vreshti me urata, po me shata e lopata. --South
The vinery is not made with blessings, but with hoes and spades.

S'gjuhet me zagar të lidhur. --Berat
You cannot hunt with a tied dog.

Sa më shpejt kositet livadhi; aq më shpejt lind bari. --Tropojë
The more you mow the lawn, the faster the grass grows.

Sekush fisheket I man per vete. --Fier
Everyone keeps the bullets for himself.

Sh

Shpjere gojën te buka e jo bukën te goja. --South
Take the mouth to the bread, not the bread to the mouth.

Shqiponja fluturon në qiell, po folenë e bën në tokë. --Labëri
The eagle flies in the sky, but nests on the ground.

T

Trupi shëndoshet me të punuar, mëndja ndërtohet me të mësuar. --South
The body builds up with work, the mind with studying.

Tosk e Gegë -- pemë nga nje degë. --Gjirokaster
Tosk and Geg -- tree from one branch.

U

Ujku e ka qafën e trashë, se ka kambët e shpejta. --Krujë
The wolf has a thick neck because it has fast legs.

Ujku fle hasmi s'fle:
The wolf sleeps, the Enemy doesn't

Ujku qimen e ndërrohet, po zakonet se harron.
The wolf changes its hair, but not its habit.

V

Vure vezën more pulën. --Krujë
If you put an egg, you get a chicken.

Retrieved from "http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albanian_proverbs"

20 Albanian Recipes

MAIN COURSES

Recipe One

Baked Lamb and Yogurt (Albanian Name: Tavë Kosi)

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

1-1/2 lbs lamb
4 tablespoons butter (1/2 stick)
2 tablespoons rice
Salt, pepper

For Yogurt sauce:

1 tablespoon flour
4 tablespoons butter (1/2 stick)
2 lbs. yogurt
5 eggs
Salt, pepper

Cooking Instructions:

Cut meat in 4 serving pieces, sprinkle each piece with salt and pepper, and bake in a moderately-heated oven with half the butter, sprinkling the meat with its gravy now and then. When meat is half-baked, add rice; remove the baking pan from the oven and leave it aside while you prepare the yogurt sauce:

Sauté flour in butter until mixed thoroughly. Mix yogurt with salt, pepper and eggs until a uniform mixture is obtained, and finally stir in the flour. Put the sauce mixture in the baking pan; sauté it with the meat pieces and bake at 375 degrees F for about 45 minutes.

Serve hot.

Recipe Two

Veal or Chicken with Walnuts (Albanian Name: Gjellë me Arra)

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons flour
15 finely crushed shelled walnuts
2 beaten egg yolks

1 minced garlic clove
1/4 lb. sticks butter
2-3 lbs of Veal or Chicken meat cut up in 1" cubes

Cooking Instructions:

Place the meat or chicken in a saucepan and cook over medium heat until tender. Then remove the meat setting it aside in a dish while leaving the remaining juices in the saucepan. In another saucepan, add the flour and sauté over heat until it becomes light brown in color (do not overcook!) and add the half a stick of butter. Then, add the finely crushed walnuts, minced garlic clove, and the two egg yolks, stirring constantly. Add the juices from the other saucepan and sauté until all the ingredients thicken. Immediately remove from the heat to avoid solidifying the egg yolks. Then fold in either the meat or chicken. Pan fry the remaining half stick of butter until brown and pour over the four servings. Enjoy it.

Recipe 3

Albanian Vegetable Pies (Albanian Name: Byrek shqiptar me perime)

Servings: 4-6.

Albanian pies are generally made of thin pastry leaves which can be rolled out at home or bought as FILO dough at a supermarket. Most of the pies prepared by Albanian cooks are not sweet; instead, pie fillings are almost always salty. Thus, a piece of such a pie may well serve as the main dish of a meal.

Spinach Pie (Albanian Name: Byrek me spinaq)

Ingredients:

1 cup oil, preferably olive oil
1 1/2 packets (or about 30) pastry leaves (Filo Dough)
1 1/2 pounds spinach, chopped
1 cup diced feta cheese
1/2 cup chopped green onions
2 eggs
salt, half teaspoon

(NOTE: A medium-sized, round baking pan is recommended because it's more authentic but any medium-sized baking pan will do).

Cooking Instructions:

Brush the baking pan with some of the oil, and start laying the pastry leaves inside. First, lay two leaves, sprinkle or brush with oil, then lay two other leaves, and repeat the procedure until half of the leaves are laid. Make sure that they cover the pan by hanging them about one inch over the edges of the pan.

Sprinkle spinach with salt, then mix well by hand. Add the feta cheese, oil, onions, eggs and salt, and spread this mixture over the already laid pastry leaves. Finish by covering the spinach with the rest of the pastry leaves repeating the first-half procedure and then roll the hanging edges of the bottom leaves over the pie (think of a pizza crust), sprinkle top with oil and bake moderately at 350°F for about 45 minutes, or until golden brown. Serve hot, accompanied with buttermilk, or beaten yogurt, thinned down in cold water or with chilled stewed prunes. Enjoy it.

Recipe Four

Leek Caserole (Albanian Name: Tavë me presh)

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

2 lbs leeks
1/2 cup oil
3/4 cup chopped onion
1/2 lb ground meat
1 tablespoon tomato sauce
Mild red pepper
Salt
Pepper

Cooking Instructions:

Cut off the green leaves from leeks; wash and cut leeks slantwise into 1-inch thick slices. Sauté in a little oil and place in a baking pan. Sauté onion and ground meat in remaining oil. Add beef stock, tomato sauce, red pepper, salt and pepper, and bring to a boil. Pour meat mixture over the Sautéed leeks. Bake for 1 hour at 375 degrees F. Serve hot.

Recipe Five

Bean Yahni Soup (Albanian Name: Jani me Fasule)

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

2 cups of dry white beans
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons tomato sauce
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 tablespoon chopped mint
salt, chili powder

Cooking Instructions:

Boil beans in hot water in an uncovered pot for 5 minutes. Rinse and boil for another 15 minutes in a covered stock pot in 3 cups hot water. Sauté onion in olive oil until it turns yellow. Add 2 tablespoons bean stock from the pot along with tomato sauce, parsley, salt and chili powder for taste. Cook for 10 minutes or until a thick sauce is formed, then pour everything into the pot. Add chopped mint, cover tightly and cook for 2 hours over low heat, or for 30 minutes in a pressure cooker. This should produce a thick juice, covering beans by 1/2 inch. Serve hot.

Recipe Six

Fried Meatballs (Albanian Name: Qofte të fërguara)

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

1 lb ground meat
1 slice stale bread
1 small onion, finely-grated
2 tablespoons chopped Feta cheese
2 tablespoons bread crumbs
2 tablespoons oil or melted butter
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
Salt
Pepper
Mint
Oregano
1 cup flour
1 cup oil (olive oil recommended)

Cooking Instructions:

Soak bread in water and squeeze hard to drain. Add ground meat, bread crumbs, oil or melted butter, onion, parsley, salt, pepper, and mint. Mix thoroughly, and form into 1-inch thick patties, sprinkle with salt, pepper, and oregano. Roll in flour and fry in hot oil. Serve hot with French Fries or mashed potatoes.

Recipe Seven

Main dish of Mixed Vegetables (Albanian Name: Turli perimesh)

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

2 lbs various vegetables (peppers, eggplant, okra, zucchini, potatoes, etc)
1/2 cup oil, divided
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup peeled chopped tomatoes
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
Salt
Pepper

Cooking Instructions:

After cutting off inedible tips of vegetables, wash and slice them into 1-inch squares. Sauté vegetables in half of the oil and remove them from the frying pan. Sauté onion and tomatoes in the remaining oil, and season with parsley, salt, and pepper. Put everything in a stock pot with a cup of water, cover tightly, and simmer until almost all moisture has cooked away. Serve hot, accompanied by steak, meatballs, or any other main dish.

Recipe Eight.

Veal with large Lima Beans (Albanian Name: Mish Qingjji me Barbunja)

Ingredients:

Veal with large Lima Beans (Mish qengji me barbunja)

1 1/2 lb veal

1 large onion, grated

salt, pepper, tomatoes

1 1/2 lb of large Lima beans

Cooking Instructions:

Select shoulder parts of the veal and cut them into 1" cubes. Wash the meat thoroughly with cold water, drain, and then place the meat in a pot together with butter and grated onions and stir fry for a few minutes. As the meat is frying, add water until the pieces are covered. Also add salt, pepper, and only two to three tablespoons of tomatoes (note: tomatoes can be cut into pieces to the size of your choice). Cover the pot and let the meat boil.

In the meantime, cut the ends off the Lima beans and clean them well (you also cut them in half if you desire). Add the Lima beans to the meat after it has been boiling for several minutes. Also add water until everything in the pot is covered. Finally, when the beans are done boiling, add the rest of the tomatoes. Then let the stew boil for a few more minutes so that the liquid can thicken.

*** Please note that tomatoes should not be added all at once in the beginning since they don't allow the Lima beans to boil at the right pace. If you would rather use fresh tomatoes, when you add the Lima beans, add whole tomatoes instead of cut ones.

Recipe Nine**Rabbit Casserole with Onions and Wine Vinegar (Albanian Name: Comlek)****Ingredients:**

1 rabbit, jointed

2 tablespoons tomato puree or 4-5 fresh tomatoes, approximately 350 gr., chopped

2 bay leaves

4 tablespoons red wine vinegar

150 ml olive oil

0.25 teaspoon sugar

4 cloves garlic, peeled

300 ml hot water

small piece cinnamon stick

salt and black pepper

700 gr. small onions, peeled but left whole

1 sprig of rosemary

1 small glass of red wine

Cooking Instructions:

The same recipe can be used for hare, with excellent results, by increasing quantities of other ingredients, since hare is much heavier than rabbit. Rabbit or hare should be treated in exactly the same preparatory way, i.e., being soaked in vinegar. (This only applies to wild varieties.) Served with fried potatoes on the side, this is a piquant dish, or if you prefer a milder taste to counterbalance the richness of the rabbit, serve with plain white rice. A green salad is always

welcomed as it adds a refreshing note.

Rinse the rabbit pieces and put them in a salad bowl with the bay leaves. Sprinkle the vinegar over the pieces and let them marinate for at least 2 hours or preferably in the fridge overnight. Heat half of the olive oil in a saucepan, pat the rabbit pieces dry and fry them in it until they are quite brown on both sides. Take out and put on to a plate. When all the rabbit pieces have been fried, put them back into the saucepan along with the garlic cloves, bay leaves, spices, rosemary and the wine. Then add the tomato puree or tomatoes, sugar and the hot water. Season, cover and cook for about 1 hour. In the meantime, heat the remaining olive oil in a frying pan and gently fry the onions. Stir them occasionally, in order to make sure they turn golden all over, for about 15 minutes. Add the contents of the frying pan to the saucepan, and shake it so that the onions spread evenly. Then cover and simmer for a further 15 minutes. Serve with fried potatoes or plain white rice and a green salad.

Recipe Ten

Meatballs with Egg and Lemon Sauce (Albanian Name: Qofte me vezë dhe limon)

Ingredients:

250 grams ground meat (lamb)
1/5 glass rice
1 tablespoon margarine
1 bunch parsley
2 1/2 glasses water
1/2 tablespoon black pepper
2 tablespoons salt
1 large onion

Sauce:

2 egg yolks or 1 egg
1/3 glass of water
1 lemon (the juice)

Cooking Instructions:

Grate the onion. Boil rice in 3 glasses of water and drain. Chop the parsley. Add the onion, rice, black pepper and 1 teaspoon salt to the ground meat and knead for 3 minutes.

Moisten hands and form walnut sized balls of the meat, put them in a pan containing chopped parsley leaves and shake gently to coat meatballs with parsley. Add 2 1/2 glasses of water, the margarine and 1 teaspoon of salt to the pan and cover. Cook over moderate heat for 30 minutes. When the meatballs are cooked, put the egg yolks or the egg, the lemon juice and water for the sauce into a bowl and beat gently.

Add the sauce to the pan, stir a couple of times to blend and serve. Instead of parsley you can put dried mint.

Recipe Eleven

Stuffed Peppers (Albanian Name: Speca të mbushura)

Cooking Instructions:

Take some peppers suitable for stuffing, wash and remove the seeds. Chop 1 large onion finely and fry. Add some mince meat (optional) + rice 1 1/2 cup + chopped dill and parsley + some tomato

puree. With this stuff the peppers. Put them on a baking tray and let them bake, adding water if necessary until the rice and peppers are soft.

Recipe Twelve

Eemam Bayaldee (Albanian Name: Imam Bajalldi)

Cooking Instructions:

Clean the Egg Plant and peel into strips. On one side cut a hole lengthwise, removing some flesh. Keep the flesh and chop it finely. Chop 1 large onion in thin strips and fry. Add the chopped Egg Plant and fry it too. Add chopped garlic, tomato puree and chopped parsley. With this mixture stuff the Egg Plant and put them in the oven to bake. Add water if necessary.

APPETIZERS

Recipe Thirteen

Tirana Furghe with Peppers (Albanian Name: Fergesë e Tiranës me spec)

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

Green or Red Peppers, half- pound

Red Tomatoes, one pound

Salted Cottage Cheese or Greek Feta Cheese, half-pound

Flour, one tablespoon

Butter, one quarter-pound stick

Virgin Olive Oil, 3 tablespoons

Add Salt, Black Pepper, and Chili Pepper to your taste

Cooking Instructions:

Peel the skin off the tomatoes and peppers. Sauté them in a saucepan for 5-7 minutes only in the olive oil and then set them aside to cool down for 15 minutes. Dice them the way you like. In another saucepan, melt the butter. Add flour, cottage or Feta cheese, and black pepper, salt and chili pepper to taste. Mix all the ingredients together and place them in saucepan. Put saucepan in a preheated 350 oven for 15 minutes. Take out and serve immediately.

Recipe Fourteen

Tirana Furghe with Veal (Albanian Name: Fergesë e Tiranës me mish vici)

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

Veal Cutlets, one pound

Salted Cottage Cheese or Greek Feta Cheese, half-pound

Flour, one tablespoon

Butter, one quarter-pound stick

Virgin Olive Oil, 3 tablespoons

Onion, one medium-sized

Add Salt, Black Pepper, and Chili Pepper to your taste

Cooking Instructions:

First, cut the veal cutlets into small pieces and then dice the onion. In a saucepan, preheat the olive oil and Sauté the meat and onion for 15 minutes. In another saucepan, melt the butter and then add flour, cottage or Feta cheese, and black pepper, salt and chili pepper to taste. Mix all the ingredients together (adding the Sautéd meat and onions) in the saucepan and place in a preheated 350 oven for 15 minutes. Take out and serve immediately.

Note: Instead of veal cutlets, beef liver can be used in the same quantity of meat and preparation/cooking instructions as above.

Recipe Fifteen

Fried Eggplants, Zucchini and Green Peppers with Plain Yogurt (Albanian Name: Tarator)

Ingredients:

1250 gr. eggplants
1500 gr. zucchini
salt
a piece of cucumber finely chopped
250 gr. yogurt
2 tablespoons salt
4 cloves of garlic
salt

Cooking Instructions:

Peel the eggplants in lengthwise strips at 1 1/2 cm intervals, then cut either in circles or in long slices. Sprinkle salt over and place the eggplants in salted water for half an hour to drain off their bitter juices. Squeeze each eggplant before putting into hot oil. Fry both sides, drain away excess oil and place on a serving plate.

Scrape the skin of the zucchinis until their green parts can be seen, sprinkle with salt and leave aside for 1.5 hours. Put flour and water into a bowl and blend together. First place the zucchini in flour-water mixture and then into the hot oil. Fry until both sides are golden. Place them with the eggplants and peppers.

Mix cucumber and yogurt, pour over the fried vegetables (if desired, crushed garlic can be added to the yogurt).

DESSERTS

Recipe Sixteen

BAKLLAVA (Albanian name: Bakllava)

Ingredients:

1/2 kg (about 18 ounces) of ready made rolled dough

200 g (about 7 ounces) of pressed walnuts
3 cups of sugar
2 cups of water
1 teaspoon of cinnamon

Cooking Instructions:

Spread the rolled dough, and sprinkle the walnuts with the cinnamon, then cover it with another layer of dough. Cut the baklava in equal squares or diamond shapes. Cover the baklava with melted butter and leave it to bake in a hot oven. Afterwards, leave it to cool. Prepare the syrup with the water and the sugar, using the amounts given above. Let the syrup boil for 5 minutes. Before removing the syrup from the heat, add the juice of half a lemon. Let the syrup cool for about 5 minutes, and then spread it on the baklava.

Recipe Seventeen

Flour Hallva (Albanian Name: Hallvë)

Ingredients:

1 glass flour
1 glass margarine
1 1/4 glasses granulated sugar
5 glasses water

Cooking Instructions:

Heat the margarine in a saucepan very gently, and Sauté the flour until golden brown in the margarine for 40 minutes over low to moderate heat. When the flour turns light golden, put the sugar and water in a separate saucepan and make syrup by boiling gently. Add the syrup to the saucepan with flour and simmer for 20 minutes, and then take out small pieces of the Hallva with a wooden spoon, form into balls and place on a serving plate. Serve warm.

Recipe Eighteen

Kadaif (Albanian Name: Kadaif)

Cooking Instructions:

On a baking pan covered with butter spread 1/2 kg (about 18 ounces) of kadaif. In the middle of the pan spread a row of walnuts and some cinnamon (1 cup of pressed walnuts should suffice). From above, spread on the kadaif 1/4 kg (about 9 ounces) of melted butter or place pieces of solid butter on the kadaif. Bake the kadaif in a hot oven until it has obtained a red color. The syrup must be added to the kadaif after it has completely cooled. Prepare the syrup using 1 kg (about 35 ounces) of sugar and 1 liter of water, which you boil for 20 minutes

Recipe Nineteen

Fried pastry with Syrup (Albanian Name: Tullumba)

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons melted margarine
1 glass flour

3 tablespoons water
4 eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 glasses olive oil
Syrup: 2 glasses sugar
1 3/4 glasses water
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Cooking Instructions:

SYRUP:

Put the sugar, water and lemon juice into a saucepan, and after melting the sugar by stirring, allow it to boil until moderately thick. Set aside to cool.

PASTRY:

Heat the margarine in a saucepan, add the water and salt and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and add the flour at once. Stir the mixture constantly with a wooden spoon and continue until mixture leaves the sides of the pan and forms a ball. This should take 6 minutes, then remove pan from heat and set aside to cool.

When cool, add the eggs and knead for approximately 10 minutes, using a pastry bag with a large nozzle, put 7-8 pastries in a pan containing the heated olive oil. Start frying the pastry over low heat, increase heat when pastry puffs up a bit and fry until golden. Remove fried pastry with a perforated spoon, draining away the oil, then put into the syrup. Strain off the syrup, place Tulumba on serving plate and serve cool.

Recipe Twenty

Cookies (Albanian name: Kurabie)

Ingredients:

1cup-of-yogurt
3-eggs
1cup-of-sugar
1/2-cup-of-butter
1-teaspoon-of-baking-soda
2-packs-of-vanilla-or-the-peel-of-half-of-a-lemon
1kg(about35ounces)offlour.

Cooking Instructions:

Mix the baking soda in the yogurt, add the above mentioned products one by one and prepare the dough. With hands covered with melted butter take pieces of the dough and shape into ovals about the size of a walnut, then place them on a butter covered baking pan and leave spaces in between each piece of dough. From above cover the pieces of dough with beat eggs, sprinkle sugar and cook in a medium-heat oven.

Albanian Walnut Cake w/ Lemon Glaze

1/2 cup butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/3 cup plain yogurt
1/3 cup buttermilk
2 cups flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1 TBS lemon rind, grated
1 cup toasted walnuts, chopped

Glaze:

3/4 cup water
1 cup sugar
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1/4 tsp ground allspice
dash of ground cloves

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Cream butter and sugar together in a large bowl. Add eggs. Mix. In a separate bowl, combine yogurt and buttermilk. In yet another bowl, sift together flour, powder and soda. Add yogurt-mix and flour-mix alternatively to the butter mixture, blending well. Add lemon grind and cinnamon. Mix well.

Butter a 9"x13" baking pan. Pour batter and bake for 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out mostly clean.

Make the glaze by simmering together all the ingredients, covered, for about 15 minutes. When the cake is done, remove it from the oven, turn the oven off, pour the glaze over the hot cake, and return it to the oven for about 10 minutes.

Aubergine Puree

2-3 aubergines
4-5 peppers
3-4 cloves garlic
parsley
vinegar
olive oil
salt.

Cooking Instructions:

Bake the aubergines and peppers on a hot plate, peel and cut into small pieces. Mix with a wooden spoon, add oil and vinegar, salt to taste, beat. Pour into a plate and top with finely chopped parsley

Baklava

1/2 kg (about 18 ounces) of ready made rolled dough

200 g (about 7 ounces) of pressed walnuts

3 cups of sugar

2 cups of water

1 teaspoon of cinnamon

Spread the rolled dough, and sprinkle the walnuts with the cinnamon, then cover it with another layer of dough. Cut the baklava in equal squares or diamond shapes. Cover the baklava with melted butter and leave it to bake in a hot oven. Afterwards, leave it to cool. Prepare the syrup with the water and the sugar, using the amounts given above. Let the syrup boil for 5 minutes. Before removing the syrup from the heat, add the juice of half a lemon. Let the syrup cool for about 5 minutes, then spread it on the baklava.

Byrek me Spinaq

(Spinach Pie)

1 cup oil, preferably olive oil

1 1/2 packets (or about 30) pastry leaves (Filo dough)

1 1/2 pounds spinach, chopped

1 cup diced feta cheese

1/2 cup chopped green onions

2 eggs

salt, half teaspoon

(NOTE: A medium-sized, round baking pan is recommended because it's more authentic but any medium-sized baking pan will do).

Brush the baking pan with some of the oil, and start laying the pastry leaves inside. First, lay two leaves, sprinkle or brush with oil, then lay two other leaves, and repeat the procedure until half of the leaves are laid. Make sure that they cover the pan by hanging them about one inch over the edges of the pan.

Sprinkle spinach with salt, then mix well by hand. Add the feta cheese, oil, onions, eggs and salt, and spread this mixture over the already laid pastry leaves. Finish by covering the spinach with the rest of the pastry leaves repeating the first-half procedure and then roll the hanging edges of the bottom leaves over the pie (think of a pizza crust), sprinkle top with oil and bake moderately at 350°F for about 45 minutes, or until golden brown. Serve hot, accompanied with buttermilk, or beaten yogurt, thinned down in cold water or with chilled stewed prunes. Sometimes a green salad adds to the meal!

Comlek

(Rabbit Casserole with Onions and Wine Vinegar)

1 rabbit, jointed
2 tablespoons tomato puree or 4-5 fresh tomatoes, approximately 350 gr., chopped
2 bay leaves
4 tablespoons red wine vinegar
150 ml olive oil
0.25 teaspoon sugar
4 cloves garlic, peeled
300 ml hot water
small piece cinnamon stick
salt and black pepper
4 grains whole allspice
700 gr. small onions, peeled but left whole
1 sprig of rosemary
1 small glass of red wine

Cooking Instructions:

The same recipe can be used for hare, with excellent results, by increasing quantities of other ingredients, since hare is much heavier than rabbit. Rabbit or hare should be treated in exactly the same preparatory way, i.e., being soaked in vinegar. (This only applies to wild varieties.) Served with fried potatoes on the side, this is a piquant dish, or if you prefer a milder taste to counterbalance the richness of the rabbit, serve with plain white rice. A green salad is always welcomed as it adds a refreshing note.

Rinse the rabbit pieces and put them in a salad bowl with the bay leaves. Sprinkle the vinegar over the pieces and let them marinate for at least 2 hours or preferably in the fridge overnight. Heat half of the olive oil in a saucepan, pat the rabbit pieces dry and fry them in it until they are quite brown on both sides. Take out and put on to a plate. When all the rabbit pieces have been fried, put them back into the saucepan along with the garlic cloves, bay leaves, spices, rosemary and the wine. Then add the tomato puree or tomatoes, sugar and the hot water. Season, cover and cook for about 1 hour. In the meantime, heat the remaining olive oil in a frying pan and gently fry the onions. Stir them occasionally, in order to make sure they turn golden all over, for about 15 minutes. Add the contents of the frying pan to the saucepan, and shake it so that the onions spread evenly. Then cover and simmer for a further 15 minutes. Serve with fried potatoes or plain white rice and a green salad.

Cracknel with Sesame

1/4 kg (about 9 ounces) of pork fat or butter
1/4 kg of powdered sugar
4 eggs
1 teaspoon of baking soda
juice from 1/2 of a lemon
2 packs of vanilla
150 g (about 5 ounces) of sesame

Melt the butter or pork fat, combine with the sugar, add the previously beaten eggs, the baking soda and the lemon juice. Mix everything well then add flour to obtain a dough with average solidity.

Spread the dough to a piece of a height of 1 cm (less than half an inch). Use a cup to cut circle shaped pieces of cracknel. Dip the pieces of cracknel in milk, spread sesame on them and place them on a baking pan. Cook in a hot oven. Cracknels with sesame do not lose their freshness for a long time.

Fergesë e Tiranës me Piperka/Mish Viçi (Tirana Fergese with Peppers)

Submitted by Chef Hasan Dajti

1/2 lb Green or Red Peppers
1 lb Red Tomatoes
1/2 lb Salted Cottage Cheese or Greek Feta Cheese
1 tbsp Flour
1/4 lb (1 stick) Butter
3 tbsp Virgin Olive Oil
Add Salt, Black Pepper, and Chili Pepper to your taste

Peel the skin off the tomatoes and peppers. Sauté them in a saucepan for 5-7 minutes only in the olive oil and then set them aside to cool down for 15 minutes. Dice them the way you like. In another saucepan, melt the butter. Add flour, cottage or Feta cheese, and black pepper, salt and chili pepper to taste. Mix all the ingredients together and place them in saucepan. Put saucepan in a preheated 350 oven for 15 minutes. Take out and serve immediately.

Fergesë e Tiranës me Mish Viçi (Tirana Fergese with Veal)

1 lb veal cutlets
1/2 lb Salted Cottage Cheese or Greek Feta Cheese
1 tbsp Flour
1/4 lb (1 stick) Butter
3 tbsp Virgin Olive Oil
Onion, one medium-sized
Add Salt, Black Pepper, and Chili Pepper to your taste

First, cut the veal cutlets into small pieces and then dice the onion. In a saucepan, preheat the olive oil and sauté the meat and onion for 15 minutes. In another saucepan, melt the butter and then add flour, cottage or Feta cheese, and black pepper, salt and chili pepper to taste. Mix all the ingredients together (adding the sautéed meat and onions) in the saucepan and place in a preheated 350 oven for 15 minutes. Take out and serve immediately.

Gjellë me Arra të Ellit

(Veal or Chicken with Walnuts)

Serves 4 people

2 tablespoons flour
15 finely crushed shelled walnuts
2 beaten egg yolks
1 minced garlic clove
1/4 lb. stick butter
2-3 lbs of Veal or Chicken meat, cut up in 1" cubes

Place the meat or chicken in a saucepan and cook over medium heat until tender. Then remove the meat setting it aside in a dish while leaving the remaining juices in the saucepan. In another saucepan, add the flour and stir over heat until it becomes light brown in color (do not overcook!) and add the half a stick of butter. Then, add the finely crushed walnuts, minced garlic clove, and the two egg yolks, stirring constantly. Add the juices from the other saucepan and stir until all the ingredients thicken. Immediately remove from the heat to avoid solidifying the egg yolks. Then fold in either the meat or chicken. Pan fry the remaining half stick of butter until brown and pour over the four servings.

Jani me Fasule (Bean Jahni Soup)

2 cups of dry white beans
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons tomato sauce
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 tablespoon chopped mint
salt, chili powder

Boil beans in hot water in an uncovered pot for 5 minutes. Rinse and boil for another 15 minutes in a covered stock pot in 3 cups hot water. Saute onion in olive oil until it turns yellow. Add 2 tablespoons bean stock from the pot along with tomato sauce, parsley, salt and chili powder for taste. Cook for 10 minutes or until a thick sauce is formed, then pour everything into the pot. Add chopped mint, cover tightly and cool for 2 hours over low heat, or for 30 minutes in a pressure cooker. This should produce a thick juice, covering beans by an inch. Serve hot.

Kurabie (dessert)

1 cup of yogurt
3 eggs
1 cup of sugar
1/2 cup of butter
1 teaspoon of baking soda
2 packs of vanilla or the peel of half of a lemon
1 kg (about 35 ounces) of flour.

Mix the baking soda in the yogurt, add the above mentioned products one by one and prepare the dough. With hands covered with melted butter take pieces of the dough and shape into ovals about the size of a walnut, then place them on a butter covered baking pan and leave spaces in between each piece of dough. From above cover the pieces of dough with beat eggs, sprinkle sugar and cook in a medium-heat oven.

Meatballs w/ Egg & Lemon Sauce

1-1/2 pounds ground lamb or beef
1/2 cup long-grain rice
1/2 cup minced onion
1 egg
2 tablespoons tomato sauce
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
Salt, freshly ground pepper
2 cups beef bouillon
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
3 egg yolks
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

In a large bowl combine the lamb or beef, rice, onion, egg, tomato sauce, parsley, and oregano. Season with salt and pepper. Mix well. Shape into 2-inch meatballs. In a large saucepan bring the bouillon to a boil over medium-high heat. Add meatballs and butter. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook, covered, until meatballs are tender, about 30 minutes. Test one to see if rice is tender. Meanwhile, in a small bowl beat the egg yolks. Stir in lemon juice. Add 1/2 cup hot liquid; mix well. Add to meatballs, stirring constantly while adding. Leave over low heat about 5 minutes, long enough to thicken a little. Serve at once. Do not reheat.

Stuffed Vine Leaves in Olive Oil

1/2 kg. vine leaves picked in brine
1/2 kg. rice
2 bunches spring onions
1 1/2 glass olive oil
4 glasses water
2 tablespoons pine nuts
1 bunch dill
1 bunch parsley
salt, black pepper and spices

Cooking Instructions:

Place the vine leaves in boiling water in order to remove their salt. Put 1/2 glass olive oil and chopped onions into a pan and saute over moderate heat while stirring with a wooden spoon, add the washed rice and continue to stir. Add water, spice, salt, chopped parsley and dill, black pepper, and pine nuts. Pour in 1/2 glass olive oil and cook gently while still stirring. Put aside to cool.

Cut off the stalks of the leaves and place stalks on the bottom of the pan where the cooking will be done, over these put one layer of vine leaves. Place 1/2 tablespoon of the filling on each leaf, roll and line up in the pan. After all the leaves are stuffed, cover the entire surface with a layer of leaves and pour the water, the remaining olive oil and lemon juice over and cook on moderate heat.

When the leaves become tender remove from heat, and put on a serving plate after they have cooled down. Decorate the plate with lemon slices, serve along with the remaining lemon juice if desired.

Can be served with tarator

Tarator

2-3 cucumbers
500g yoghurt
1/2 walnuts
3-4 cloves garlic
olive oil
salt

Beat the yoghurt, add the crushed garlic, ground walnuts, finely diced cucumbers (sliced into small pieces), oil and salt. Stir and dilute with cold water. Serve sprinkled with finely chopped dill or mint.

Tavë Kosi

(Baked Lamb and Yogurt)

1-1/2 lbs lamb
4 tablespoons butter (1/2 stick)
2 tablespoons rice
Salt, pepper

For Yogurt sauce:

1 tablespoon flour
4 tablespoons butter (1/2 stick)
2 lbs. yogurt
5 eggs
Salt, pepper

Cut meat in 4 serving pieces, sprinkle each piece with salt and pepper, and bake in a moderately-heated oven with half the butter, sprinkling the meat with its gravy now and then. When meat is half-baked, add rice; remove the baking pan from the oven and leave it aside while you prepare the yogurt sauce:

Sauté flour in butter until mixed thoroughly. Mix yogurt with salt, pepper and eggs until a uniform mixture is obtained, and finally stir in the flour. Put the sauce mixture in the baking pan; stir it with the meat pieces and bake at 375 degrees F for about 45 minutes. Serve hot.

serves 4 people

Tulumba

(Fried pastry with syrup)

2 tablespoons melted margarine
1 glass flour
3 tablespoons water
4 eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 glasses olive oil
Syrup: 2 glasses sugar
1 3/4 glasses water
1 teaspoon lemon juice

SYRUP:

Put the sugar, water and lemon juice into a saucepan, and after melting the sugar by stirring, allow it to boil until moderately thick. Set aside to cool.

PASTRY:

Heat the margarine in a saucepan, add the water and salt and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and add the flour at once. Stir the mixture constantly with a wooden spoon and continue until mixture leaves the sides of the pan and forms a ball. This should take 6 minutes, then remove pan from heat and set aside to cool.

When cool, add the eggs and knead for approximately 10 minutes, using a pastry bag with a large nozzle, put 7-8 pastries in a pan containing the heated olive oil. Start frying the pastry over low heat, increase heat when pastry puffs up a bit and fry until golden. Remove fried pastry with a perforated spoon, draining away the oil, then put into the syrup. Strain off the syrup, place tulumba on serving plate and serve cool.



Pasticho

Ingredients

- 3/4 lb thin spaghetti, cooked and drained
- 1 cup of crumbled feta cheese
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- salt & pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter, approx

Directions

1-Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spread glass pan with butter. Cook spaghetti according to directions on box and drain

2-In a lg bowl add 3 eggs, feta cheese and milk, mix together.

3-Place cooked spaghetti into a 9x12 glass baking dish.

4-Add in egg/cheese and milk mixture.

5-If spaghetti isn't covered, add in more milk and mix until milk is just covering spaghetti is covered. Cover with foil and bake for 40 min approximately Let cool for 10 and serve. Also good cold!

Cookies in Syrup - (Sheqerpar

Ingredients:

2 cup of sugar	3/4 cup water
¾ cup butter softened	1/4 tsp baking soda
2 egg yolks	1/4 tsp vanilla extract
2 cups of flour	2 whl cloves - (to 3)

Method

Mix 1 cup sugar and butter in bowl. Add yolks and stir until smooth. Add flour and baking soda and stir until soft dough forms.

Roll out dough. Cut into 2-inch rounds. Place on baking sheets and bake at 350 degrees until pale gold, 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, make syrup. Bring remaining 1 cup sugar and water to boil in saucepan and cook until syrup spins a long thread, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat and season with vanilla and cloves to taste.

Remove cookies from oven when golden and cool. Pour hot syrup over cookies. Serve at room temperature.

Tulumba (Albanian Version)

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons melted margarine (or butter we really use butter)
- 1 glass flour
- 3 tablespoons water
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 glasses olive oil

Syrup

- 2 glasses sugar
- 1 3/4 glasses water
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Directions

SYRUP

Put the sugar, water and lemon juice into a saucepan, and after melting the sugar by stirring, allow it to boil until moderately thick. Set aside to cool.

PASTRY

Heat the margarine in a saucepan, add the water and salt and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and add the flour at once. Stir the mixture constantly with a wooden spoon and continue until mixture leaves the sides of the pan and forms a ball. This should take 6 minutes, then remove pan from heat and set aside to cool.

When cool, add the eggs and knead for approximately 10 minutes, using a pastry bag with a large nozzle or a serrated spoon, put 7-8 pastries in a pan containing the heated olive oil. Start frying the pastry over low heat, increase heat when pastry puffs up a bit and fry until golden. Remove fried pastry with a perforated spoon, draining away the oil, then put into the syrup. Strain off the syrup, place tulumba on serving plate and serve cool.